Daily Report

Central Eurasia

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FBIS-SOV-95-241 *15 December 95*

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Key Developments

'Text' of Yeltsin's Address to Nation

LD1512120595 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1056 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW December 15 (ITAR-TASS) — Follows the full advance text of President Boris Yeltsin's televised address to the nation on Friday devoted to the December 17 State Duma elections, received by Tass from the press service of the head of state.

"Good afternoon, esteemed Russians!

In one day, on December 17 there are elections to the State Duma. On the eve of the elections I would like to share with you some of my thoughts.

The upcoming event is not a formal vote which we were used to in the past decades and when the results were known to everyone in advance. These are true elections today.

I am attentively following the course of the election campaign.

Dozens of parties and movements want to get into the State Duma. There is an enourmous number of candidates for each deputy's seat.

And many of them really want to help Russia. They have interesting, businesslike proposals and major ideas of the state scope.

At the same time, I cannot agree everything which has been voiced.

Unfortunately, certain candidates have told the voters: everything is wrong, everything is bad. Vote for me and the situation will improve and all problems will be solved: the problems of the army, plants will begin to work at full capacity, sufficiency and quietness will come to every home...

Promises, promises, promises.

What can I say?

This is, probably, natural. There will always be people who would like to get a seat in the Duma at any price. I have met such people. It is very easy: to promise much and make people like you. But you and I know: everything can go smoothly only on paper.

It is most dangerous when representatives of certain parties want to take the country to the past. It is possible that they are sincerely convinced that such is the only correct way. However, I am sure this is a tragic mistake. We have been traversing the path, which they want to take us back to, for over 70 years. This is enough for conclusions.

So what? Did we have a life better than in other countries? No! The country failed even to come close to the living standards of developed states, including those whose economy, like ours, was ruined in the years of war. It is impossible to argue with that.

Why then are there many people today who look at the past with nostalgia? It is because our young age, love and personal honest labour are there. The experience of many and many years, of several generations makes us acknowledge:

— There is no salvation either in the planned economy, or in a tough control over prices. Economy never worked properly by commands and will not work. It cannot be either boosted by a General's order.

— We shall never get rid of the need, if, like it was in the past, the free ownership of land is banned and property is reshared anew. What and who would gain from such a bloody redistribution?

Dear citizens!

The aggravation of relations with our neighbours, even for the sake of restoring the former Soviet Union, will become a tragedy. And it were these ideas which were voiced during the election campaign by representatives of a number of parties, blocs and candidates well-known to you.

This is not the light in the end of tunnel for Russia. Most probably, it is a reflection of new and more horrible fires of a civil war.

Let us think, will it be better if we are again divided by hostility, anger and hatred? No and no once again.

What can be more dangerous when, in the middle of a ford, some people are pulling back, others to the left and the third — to the right. Beware: Russia can be overturned again.

Our country needs no revolutions. That's enough for attempts to start the life anew, from a blank sheet. Russia needs sufficiency, quietness and order.

I know that Russian voters sympathise with those parties, blocs and movements, who have moderate positions, real goals and the methods of their implementation rule out extreme means and adventures. I like such a position!

We have been learning to live in new conditions only for five years. And we have already learned something. Although the studies do not go easily. Life is difficult so far.

These are the difficulties which are born by pensioners, the military, the workers of defence branches of industry, the Russian intelligentsia and others.

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This is also the crime rate and the corruption among many state officials.

This is also the problems of millions of people who have entrusted their savings to financial swindlers.

I am well aware of the scope of the problems. But I also know what efforts does the government make to overcome these difficulties. Still we are moving to a quieter, normal and decent life.

Some work has already been done. With great difficulty the cooperation between the President, the Government and the parliament has been launched. This is a real achievement of the last two years.

You must agree that it should be preserved and strengthened. It is it which allows to build our Russian home, to gradually solve numerous problems. And believe me, it can't be done faster.

Let us together preserve the so far fragile stability which we have achieved with such big effort, as well as accord in our common home — Russia.

Dear citizens!

Today I want to address those who have not made their choice yet, those who believe that nothing depends on them, as voters, like it was before. I cannot agree with such moods both as the President and as a Russian citizen.

I am addressing my young compatriots. The older generation did not have the possibility to choose their own way of living and thinking. Other people decided for us. Those who did not obey had it very hard.

Times have changed. You, young people, have the right to decide your destiny for yourselves. But for this it is necessary for you to come to the polls. If you fail to turn out, your indifference will vote for a return to the past. And you yourselves will have to pay for this first of all, you, who are young now.

You must not allow the forces of the past to seize power again. You should not allow the country to be taken back to the time when everyone was told what to think, what clothes to wear, which hairdo to have and what songs to sing.

All this brings to mind a popular saying: "We value little what we have but bemoan the loss of it." Freedom is what we have. It is like air. You do not notice it when you have it. But its absence will be immediately felt.

Today, life itself insistently asks every young person: what Russia do you want for yourself and your children?

I do not believe that you do not care! For this reason, come to the polling stations, come with your friends. Cast your ballots yourselves! Cast your ballots for yourselves! Your whole life lies ahead. And I want very much your life to be happier than that of our generation.

I am addressing people of my age, middle-aged and elderly people. I ask you to remember your mother and your father when you vote. Remember your childhood and adolescence.

How many troubles your parents lived through! How many were the dangers they shielded us from and protected us from! It is thanks to them that we remember all the good things we had in the past.

But their own life was very hard.

They knew what hunger was like, what real fear was like, and what mass repressions were like. And they knew it not from the books.

Do we wish the same for our grandchildren?

May your good sense prompt the correct choice.

I learned recently that the word "candidate" means a person clad in white. In ancient Rome those who aspired to a state office wore white clothes. The white colour is a symbol of virtuous intentions. It is up to you to judge the virtue and integrity of those who seek election, their degree of proficiency and good sense. How well they can strengthen stability and concord in Russia. It is up to you to decide in whom to place your confidence and whom to refuse.

Many people feel worked up. But may God protect you against giving in to the sentiments of the moment and quick temper and casting your ballot to spite somebody. And subsequently looking again for somebody to blame for our troubles.

It has come to be so that in our country the President is responsible for everything. And you, dear fellow citizens, judge me severely, sometimes mercilessly.

But on December 17, it is up to you to make your decision. It would be fair for everyone to feel responsible on that day.

The destiny of Russia is in your hands!

Chernomyrdin Addresses Russian Voters

LD1412231995 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1734 GMT 14 Dec 95

["Statement" by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Esteemed Russian citizens! Today I make what will probably be my most important remarks to you. I intend to spell out the position taken

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by the Russia Is Our Home movement toward our political adversaries. You know perfectly well that my comrades-in-arms and I have long striven to campaign for the confidence of the electorate in a correct and calm manner. We have not attacked those who have openly declared war on us, who have described us as the main evil. We have tried, first and foremost, to explain the essence of our program to people in an honest manner. We have not hurled war cries at our opponents, because we knew that we would win the support of many Russian citizens without abusing other parties. We still believe this is the case.

But now it is very important to show once again who is with whom in contemporary Russia, who wishes to unite all the people in the construction of our common home, and who represents the interests of individual extremist groups. Yes, it is no secret that some of the voters will support such parties. But many people already realize that a divided country in which political war is raging, with everybody in rival camps, will not hold together peacefully for long. It will collapse.

Therefore I have to speak now about the possibility of forces which are very, very dangerous for Russia coming to power. They are hoping that some of our Russian citizens will cast their votes without thinking on that important day, 17 December. It is a pity that many people believe those noisy and imaginary allegations that the positions of the Russia Is Our Home and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation are identical, that our program is similar to the promises made by other radicals.

Everything here is clear. We are far removed from those who are dragging the country backward. We are far removed from those who put their trust in instant happiness based on foreign recipes. Our ideas are clear. We do not intend to cancel out all the transformations of recent years, but we do not want to drag the people along the path of endless reform in Russia. We do not want this and we will not do it. That is the fundamental distinguishing feature in the program of the Russia Is Our Home movement.

To put it simply, if you are building a house, don't knock down the foundations which you have just laid. If you are building a house, don't spend every day dreaming up new ways of altering it. A house is a house at the end of the day. It is not a hut from Russian folk tales which can be told what to do with magic words. It is not a toy to be assembled one way one day and another way tomorrow. Our home today is a huge country, Russia. It is dangerous to play games with its design and re-design.

But judge for yourselves. What are Russia's saviors, in inverted commas, from among the so-called neo-Communists offering the people? They want to go back to the past, to break up the country again, to have a revolution. Their current promises not to confiscate property from everybody if they come to power do not deceive anybody. Private property is not, basically, such a subtle concept. It either exists or does not exist in the country. Today's Russian citizens have long realized that it is not such a bad idea to have property.

If your neighbor intends to vote for the leftists, ask him what he wants. Does he want to be left without the right to build a house for himself and his children? Does he want to give his land away to a collective farm and then bow down before its chairman for the rest of his life? Does he want to spend his time waiting outside the district party committee for permission to travel abroad? Maybe it is a long time since he lined up for sugar tokens. Maybe he misses party meetings after work. He is unlikely to give you a sensible answer. If he tells you that he favors power for the working people, don't believe him. We know perfectly what that was like in real life. There was much that was good in our Soviet past. There is no denying that. But let us not return to what was bad. Let us retain from our past those things that people need, don't simply drag them backward into the past. But that is what is being demanded.

Do people today really want tokens, district party committees, shock labor projects, and a Soviet Union which is restored by violence? The whole point is that these things are not wanted. People need an opportunity to work in peace, to have their own property, and to know that a mighty state, which will stick up for Russian citizens anywhere, be it in Vologda or Transbaykal, is defending their interests.

Why frighten these Russian citizens with the prospect of hunger, poverty, unemployment, and slavery? There is no need either to intimidate or to deceive the people. Where is this hunger, where is this unemployment? If the leftists come to power, all this will happen. Of course people do have their troubles. We do not ignore them. But look at something else. After all, construction of new private housing is in full swing around towns and settlements. More people have their own cars, and not just cars. Are you really saying that these people are all new Russians, bankers and businessmen? We don't have that many bankers in the country. There are not thousands of directors of trading firms living in Kemerovo. And who is building the houses? Who is driving the new cars? They are normal working people, including farmers or workers employed by a properly organized collective enterprise in the countryside. They include entrepreneurs and civil servants. They include

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the workers of a good factory, at which the director is a thrifty employer who channels effort where it is needed. He is a real director, an economist who understands the market economy and invests money in the construction of cottages for his factory workers.

Some people tell me that not all Russian citizens live that way, receiving their wages on time and having the opportunity to build their own home in peace and quiet. Yes, that is true. Don't think that we don't see and hear those who really have not yet found their place in the new economy, who are in distress, who live badly. Life is hard, very hard, for them. But I also know something else. In a market economy, regulated by effective state control, everybody will find his place sooner or later. There will not be everlasting poverty. Everything will work out. There will be prosperity in our home. If you don't believe this, vote for our adversaries. If you don't want to work for yourselves and for the country, go and demonstrate.

But there is another important point to be made. No matter how much the left and right-wing radicals and reformers differ from each other, they are basically identical. The fact that one party is led by a convinced Marxist and the other by a market economist who has studied in the west is not the point. The point is this: They want the same thing — they want to go on wrecking the country, with one lot advocating leaps forward to a bright future, which for some reason they describe as reforms; and the other lot wanting to do it by returning to a bright past, which for some reason they describe as the will of the people.

That is quite different from what we are offering. We want to complete the reforms and to restore order in our home, to make the Russian citizen the complete master there. Think a bit about what that word "master" means. It is not a nickname for Stalin which people were afraid to use out aloud. It is not owner in the Western sense, the man who owns, in the full sense of the word, a factory, a newspaper or a ship. It refers to our Russian citizen, the man of action, the man who succeeds in life. This success can manifest itself in different ways. There is nothing wrong with that. Success for most people, a place in life for most people is not collective farm levelling down or promises of paradise along western lines. Success for Russian people means something special. He has succeeded when his home, his family, his work, his pride in the country is not fanciful and not the same for everybody. Our people know how to find such success. They have to work and not to doubt that the country, the state, and the authorities will always help and support them. It won't be any other way in our home. That is the only way it will be.

Filatov To Support Gaydar's Democratic Choice Bloc

LD1512130095 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1246 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 15 (INTERFAX) — President Yeltsin's chief-of-staff Sergey Filatov will support the Russia's Democratic Choice — United Democrats bloc led by Yegor Gaydar in the December 17 parliamentary elections.

In an interview with INTERFAX Filatov hoped the Gaydar bloc would scale the 5% electoral barrier.

Nonetheless, "those who support the Gaydar bloc fear that it will not scale the 5% barrier and their votes will, consequently, be lost." As a result, they are beginning to look for a "reliable party" which will be sure to win 5% of the popular vote. This is something that worries Filatov.

It is not by incident that media editions are playing up this alarming information, Filatov said.

Filatov sees Gaydar's party as "the only one that knows a way and is able to carry out the necessary reforms."

Whether new legislation will work in favor of, and not against, the reforms, depends on whether Gaydar and his supporters join the law-making process, Filatov said.

The President's analysts expect the Communists and their allies to win no more than 50% of the popular vote in the December elections.

Under certain conditions, though, they will be able to win more than 226 Duma mandates, Filatov told INTERFAX adding that only 30% of the voters have already made up their minds in the runup for the elections.

Filatov sees the last days before the elections as decisive and is worried about this.

He described both upcoming and previous elections as unpredictable. Neither the Democrats nor the authorities nor the lawmakers have been able to create conditions for building a civic society and genuine leader parties, he said.

In Filatov's view, "a certain structure is apparently working in this direction and makes it impossible for either party to emerge as a national leader."

President's Public Chamber Issues Appeal

MM1412141095 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 14 Dec 95 p 1

["Appeal From the Expanded Session of the Russian Federation President's Public Chamber in Connection

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With the Elections to the Russian Federation Federal Assembly State Duma," dated 9 December 1995: "To Develop and Expand Democracy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Participants in the expanded session of the Russian Federation President's Public Chamber note that the forthcoming election of deputies to the Russian Federation Federal Assembly State Duma is designed to ensure the succession of representative power and form a new parliament capable of playing a major role in overcoming the crisis in the country and championing the development of democratic processes and the achievement of civil accord in Russia on the same basis. The future deputies will have a large amount of serious work to do in connection with the adoption of laws facilitating the betterment of the people's standard of living, the improvement of the democratic state system, the protection of human rights, and the resolution of many other problems.

Nationwide elections are a method of forming and strengthening civil society and realizing the idea of direct people's power aimed at consolidating social forces. The dialogue in society needs to be continued and developed; Russian citizens must be encouraged to participate actively in the elections; and everything should be done to facilitate the elections being held in accordance with the Russian Federation Constitution, without any alterations or violations. Honest elections are in the general interest, irrespective of our political or other preferences.

Participants in the expanded session of the Russian Federation President's Public Chamber:

1. Call on all public organizations to treat the election of deputies to the Russian Federation Federal Assembly State Duma as an important matter in the development of democracy and a necessary condition for consolidating stability in society, and to hold them 17 December in an atmosphere of civil accord.

2. Appeal to parties, blocs, and candidates participating in the election campaign to strictly observe the rules of conduct for election campaigning and legal and ethical norms.

3. Call on the mass media to cover the election objectively, not to allow electoral law to be disregarded, to use the rights provided by law to organize monitoring of the progress of the elections and the vote count, and to help increase society's political culture.

4. Recommend that regional public chambers give effective support and specific help to electoral commissions at local level during the elections.

TsIK Accredits Monitors for Elections

LD1412170495 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1552 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 14 (INTERFAX) — More than 900 monitors from more than 50 states and ten international organizations, including the Council of Europe, United Nations, OSCE, and other groups have been accredited in the Central Electoral Commission [TsIK] as of December 14, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin reported at a briefing in Moscow Thursday.

As many as 110 monitors from abroad followed the 1993 elections, Karasin said.

"Russia's Foreign Ministry is rendering an all-round assistance to the monitors. A special group headed by the chief of the department on international humanitarian cooperation and on human rights Teimuraz Ramishvili was formed by the ministry. The group closely cooperates with the CEC [Central Electoral Commission," Karasin said.

He attracted attention to the fact that monitors have the right to follow not only the elections themsleves but the process of their preparation in contrast to the 1993 elections. They have an opportunity to visit not only Moscow, but any other cities and villages.

Monitors may also follow elections abroad. "The Russian embassies abroad will assist them in this," Karasin said.

Court Rules Newspaper Wronged Candidate Terekhov

MM1412153095 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 14 Dec 95 p 5

[Unattributed report: "In the Court of Appeal for Information Disputes: A Journalist Is Obliged To Know the Laws" — from the 'Documents' section]

[FBIS Translated Text] On 27 October the newspaper MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS published under the headline "Parade of Authorities" a list of candidate deputies for various electoral blocs who "have in the past been convicted by a court of various crimes and served their sentence in places of imprisonment." The first paragraph of this list featured the name of S. Terekhov, candidate State Duma deputy for the "Power to the People!" electoral bloc.

It was this publication that provided Terekhov with the grounds to address a statement to the Court of Appeal, maintaining that the information does not tally with reality, discredits him as a candidate deputy in the eyes

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of the voters, and, moreover, causes sociopolitical harm to the "Power to the People!" electoral bloc.

It follows from the materials submitted to the Court of Appeal, including by the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, and also from the explanations by those involved in this information dispute, that Terekhov really was not convicted under sentence by a court and did not serve a sentence in a places of imprisonment. The fact that criminal proceedings were instituted against him in the past and that this was followed by an amnesty cannot be categorized as a "criminal record."

At the same time, the Court of Appeal believes, both MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS and journalist V. Novikov, who prepared the material for publication, could have avoided the mistake if the latter had shown elementary conscientiousness. The point is that the previous day, 26 October, precisely he had reported two mutually exclusive facts in the article "Ryabov Has Started Handing Over Criminals": It was claimed, on the one hand, that Terekhov had a conviction and, on the other, that he had not been tried. Moreover, he reported that N. Ryabov had apologized to the candidate deputies mistakenly included on the ill-starred list, including Terekhov. But in the very next issue the same author included him in the list of "criminals."

The Court of Appeal decided that the information concerning the candidate State Duma deputy for the "Power to the People!" electoral bloc published by MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS in the article "Parade of Authorities" for 27 October 1995 and also in the article "Ryabov Has Started Handing Over Criminals" for 26 October 1995 is not authentic.

MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS Chief Editor P. Gusev was ordered to consider the question of Novikov's disciplinary liability for the violations committed and to refute the inauthentic information in the next few issues of the newspaper.

Regional Activities

Chechen Election Situation 'Extremely Tense'

MM1512122095 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 15 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by Igor Rotar: "Even a Prophet Is Trying To Become the Chechen Leader"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy — The situation in Chechnya on the eve of the elections is extremely tense. On Wednesday night [13 December] around 40 of Dudayev's guerrillas seized a hospital building in Gudermes. Fortunately it was possible to evacuate the patients but the deputy chief physician remained there. The convoy of federal forces given the mission of dislodging the guerrillas was shelled on entering the city. There were fatalities and casualties on both sides. Groznyy has been totally blockaded by federal troops — entry to and exit from Groznyy is forbidden.

Even people who had no intention of leaving the Chechen capital at this troubled time feel uncomfortable. "In theory I am not averse to taking part in the elections, but in the current situation I am simply afraid. I would do better to stay at home!" Russian-speaking pensioner Yevgeniya Stuchilina said. "I am afraid of going to the polling place. If people go, then I also will go," Salavdin Elberdoa, owner of the house where I was staying, admitted.

Such fears cannot be called unfounded. At least outwardly you get the impression that Moscow is preparing less for the elections than for a general battle with the Dudayevites on election day. The troops have been put on heightened alert. "We will be ready for a combat operation within 15 minutes of anything happening," Leonid Chervotkin, military commandant of the Chechen Republic, told journalists. Downtown Groznyy has been closed to motor vehicles and spetsnaz forces armed to the teeth are peeping out of the ruins.

Regrettably, even these increased security measures are not halting the activity of the supporters of independence. A column of several hundred demonstrators periodically roams the city streets. The demonstrators yell the slogans: "Freedom for Chechnya!" "Withdraw the troops," "Vanya! Go home!"

In this atmosphere it seems that only very determined, fearless people will agree to take part in the election campaign.

The irrationality of what is happening is increased by the career records of some of the Chechen presidential candidates. There are currently three contenders for the post: Doku Zavgayev, former first secretary of the Checheno-Ingushetia Oblast [party] Committee; Lecho Saligov, director of the Groznyy publishing complex; and Mavsar Aduyev, well-known as "Ayzen — the great prophet of the day."

On the first day of the elections, which began in Groznyy 14 December, not that many people turned out. But polling places were nevertheless not deserted.

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Novokuznetsk Candidate Wrongly Labeled as Criminal

MM1412172295 VYBORY-95 WWW in Russian 30 Nov-6 Dec 95

[Unattributed report: "Novokuznetsk" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Translated Text] As you know, the Central Electoral Commission published a list of State Duma candidate deputies with a criminal record 27 October. Valeriy Sergeyevich Myasnikov (Novokuznetsk, "Forward, Russia!" movement) found himself on this list. It turned out that another Valeriy Sergeyevich lives here, who was in actual fact recently released from jail in September or October 1995. But the two Valeriy Sergeyevich Myasnikovs have different dates and places of birth. And Myasnikov-2, who is serving a sentence in jail, certainly could not have run for State Duma deputy. "....One can only regret that the vast Central Electoral Commission machine grinds up everything indiscriminately...." our correspondent commented. It has become known that the "Forward, Russia!" movement intends to file charges against the Central Electoral Commission for slander and psychological harm.

Election Guidelines

Court Condemns Media Campaign Breaches

MM1412170495 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 14 Dec 95 p 6

[Statement No. 3(14) of the Court of Appeal for Information Disputes "On Several Cases of Violation of Election Campaigning Rules", signed by Court Chairman A.B. Vengerov in Moscow on 9 December 1995]

[FBIS Translated Text] The election campaign is entering its final stages. The last week of the period given over to campaigning may prove decisive in determining the voters' political preferences.

The degree to which these preferences turn out to be well-founded depends in no small measure on the mass media and strict adherence to the campaigning rules and procedures.

The legislature has guaranteed candidates and electoral blocs equal access to the mass media. On the whole this rule is being observed.

The court has, however, been receiving numerous complaints from those involved in the electoral process about various violations of the election campaigning rules by television and radio companies.

An absolutely intolerable situation has developed in Moscow. The "Moskva" television and radio company — whose founders include an organ of state power (Moskomimushchestvo [the Moscow Committee for the Management of State Property]) which obligates it to provide free airtime to Moscow candidate deputies — is categorically refusing to carry out this legal norm and is ignoring the lawful demands of the Moscow City Electoral Commission and the court.

Complaints have also accumulated against the all-Russia television and radio companies. Several of their managers "forgot" about the legal requirement contained in point 1.3 of the Russian Federation Central Electoral Commission's Instruction "On the Procedure for Providing Airtime on State Television and Radio Companies' Channels...".

Nobody, of course, deprived journalists — including those working for state television — of the right to comment on the election campaign. But how does this legally protected right accord with the unexpected appearance in the program "Gentlemen Show" of B. Fedorov, leader of "Forward, Russia!" electoral association, with his political jokes (VGTRK [All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company], 24 November 1995)? Or the constant references to the "Russia Is Our Home" association in the program "Brain-Ring" (ORT [Russian Public Television] 11 and 18 November 1995)?

To what kind of election campaigning can we ascribe the hour-long broadcast about O. Kovalev, one of the leaders of the "Russia's Choice — United Democrats" bloc, which went out on the "Peterburg- 5th Channel" state television and radio company? There are quite a few such examples demonstrating television and radio company managers' clear political preferences and their equally clear disrespect for the law.

The criticism by many candidate deputies and voters of the contents of news broadcasts on state television are justified. The frequency of appearances on these broadcasts in any news context by the chairman of the Russian Government — who is at one and the same time leader of an electoral association — goes beyond what is permissible.

Unfortunately, it proves necessary time and time again to check out incidents of the competing candidate deputies themselves flouting electoral legislation and ethical standards. Many of these incidents have come under the scrutiny of the court and the Central Electoral Commission. But new cases have also appeared.

For example, appearing on ORT's campaigning slot on 6 December, V.V. Zhirinovskiy, chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia [LDPR]), put forward his method of "establishing order" in the Caucasus: "If just one shot is fired from any village [aul], if one Russian

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soldier is killed or wounded, (if you vote for the LDPR) I will give the order to destroy that village! We will destroy 5-6 villages, burn them to the ground with napalm; there will be no war."

What is this, if not the whipping up of ethnic hatred and the flagrant flouting of the Constitution? Mr. Zhirinovskiy chose as his "instrument of retribution" (against women, old folk, and children!) napalm, whose use has been condemned and banned by the world community long ago.

Another monopolist of the "Russian idea" — N.N. Lysenko, leader of the National Republican Party of Russia, who declares himself to be more or less the only defender of the Russian people's interests, is proposing a remedy for the problem of crime that is similarly simple and "effective" (Russian Television, 29 November 1995). It emerges that to achieve this it is enough to remove from the territory of Russia the "mafia mob from the republics of the Transcaucasus and Central Asia." N.N. Lysenko, citing in support of his viewpoint a certain Moscow Youth Sociological Association which is unknown in sociological circles, presents an inflated statistic from outside the realm of common sense: Between 60 and 90 percent of the most serious crimes in Russia are allegedly committed by these very "immigrants" At the same time, he naturally keeps quiet about the general level of crime and its social and legal aspects.

The court considers it essential to draw attention to the fact that the election campaign may "continue" after 17 December, this time in the guise of the many court cases concerning inter alia violations of the campaigning rules.

In assessing the progress of the campaigning, the court states its intention to try by all means to eradicate violations of electoral legislation and to hold the transgressors responsible in accordance with the law.

In sending this statement to the Central Electoral Commission, electoral associations and blocs, and the mass media, the court expects that in the time remaining before the elections all those involved in the electoral process will observe strictly their legal obligations and will, through their actions, not give cause for calling into question the results of the expression of popular will.

Forecasts & Commentary

Daily Assesses Chances of Top Duma Contenders

MK1412151395 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 14 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Mikhail Petrachev: "Not Only Party Lists Are Vying for Votes. Campaign in Single-Seat Constituencies May Decide Fate of Future Duma"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The summit of the parliamentary Olympus is the general federal constituency surrounded by the 5-percent barrier, whereas its foundation consists of the 225 single-seat constituencies. Let us take a look at these political labyrinths located in the 89 Russian Federation components, especially since few people dare to enter them owing to the labyrinths' complexity.

All in all, running for the second State Duma in single-seat constituencies are about 1,700 representatives of 60 parties and about 1,000 independent candidates — an average of 12 persons per seat.

Many parties and movements tried to take their campaigns to the entire territory of Russia at the first stage of preparing for the election. The LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia], for example, nominated its candidates in every constituency; the NDR [Russia Is Our Home] and "Derzhava" in 80 percent of the constituencies; the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation], the APR [Agrarian Party of Russia], and Ivan Rybkin's Bloc in 70 percent; "Yabloko," "Russia's Democratic Choice," and "Forward, Russia!" in 60 percent; and the Party of Workers' Self-Government, the "Power to the People" bloc, and "Communists — Working Russia" in 50 percent of the constituencies. Once signature collection was over, the LDPR managed to keep in single-seat constituencies 187 (83.1 percent) of its nominated candidates; the CPRF, 131 (80.4 percent); the NDR, 108 (59.7 percent); the KRO [Congress of Russian Communities], 90 (64.2 percent); the APR, 90 (53.6 percent); "Russia's Democratic Choice," 75 (54.8 percent); and "Yabloko," 71 (55.0 percent). These figures primarily attest to the organizational potential of the parties rather than to their popularity with the voters.

Acting in the most coordinated manner as allies among the major parties in single-seat constituencies are the CPRF and the APR, with the "Russia's Democratic Choice" and "Yabloko" on the opposite political flank. The LDPR is campaigning against all, including the Communists, the democrats, and the national patriots in a majority of constituencies, which lands it in a rather difficult position. "Russia Is Our Home" must have put the emphasis on work in the provinces and is now one of the few electoral associations that have

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decided completely against nominating their candidates in Moscow electoral districts.

The experience of parliamentary elections in Russia and Belarus shows that various major parties that nominate their candidates in single-seat constituencies have rather steady coefficients of effectiveness. For example, in the 1993 State Duma elections, the candidates nominated by highly effective parties won in 20 percent of the cases ("Russia's Choice," CPRF, APR, "Women of Russia"), the candidates of parties of average effectiveness won in 5-10 percent of the constituencies (LDPR, "Yabloko," "Civil Union," RDDR [Russian Movement of Democratic Reforms]), and the candidates nominated by low-effectiveness parties won in 0-4 percent of the districts (PRES [Party of Russian Unity and Accord], DPR [Democratic Party of Russia], "Cedar," and so on).

The CPRF, APR and "Women of Russia" are most likely to keep their place in the highly effective group in the 1995 parliamentary elections. The leading group could include the new party of power, "Russia Is Our Home," while "Russia's Democratic Choice," which has long lost its ruling party status, will leave it.

In the average effectiveness group of parties, which could get into parliament about 10 percent of their candidates in single-seat constituencies, the LDPR and "Yabloko" are most likely to keep their positions. They will also be joined by "Russia's Democratic Choice." Among the parties making their debut, the Congress of Russian Communities — as well as Ivan Rybkin's Bloc, which has many candidates who have experienced a successful political struggle in single-seat constituencies — are likely to qualify for the second league at once. Likely to reach the lower, 5-percent threshold of this group are five more beginners: "Forward, Russia!", the Party of Workers' Self-Government," "Derzhava," "Power to the People!", and "Communists — Working Russia." The coefficient for entering the Duma for the remaining 29 electoral associations will perhaps fluctuate between 0 and 4 percent.

Sixty-three percent of the candidates running for the State Duma of the second convocation in single-seat constituencies are members of various parties and movements. The remaining are independent candidates. Therefore, it can be assumed that, as a result, 150 party and 75 independent deputies will be elected to parliament according to the majority system. Knowing these general figures and the number of candidates nominated by electoral associations and the rough effectiveness coefficients of the various parties, it is possible to try to compile a forecast of the struggle for parliament between parties in single-seat constituencies. The CPRF may have in the State Duma, under the majority system, around 26 deputies; the NDR, 22; the APR, 15; the LDPR and KRO, 11 each; "Yabloko," "Russia's Democratic Choice," and Ivan Rybkin's Bloc, on average 7 each; "Women of Russia," 4; and "Forward, Russia!", the Party of Workers' Self-Government, "Derzhava," "Power to the People!", and "Communists — Working Russia," on average 3 deputies each. The other 29 electoral associations will share the remaining 25 deputy seats. The decisive role there will no longer be played by the image of this or that party, but rather by the luster of individual political figures, as well as the contenders' organizational abilities and financial potential.

It should be noted that there will be a sufficient number of "secret agents" of various parties among the 75 independent deputies. The CPRF, NDR, "Yabloko," APR, and KRO will noticeably swell their parliamentary factions from this personnel reserve.

North Caucasus Expected To Be in Mainstream

MK1512101895 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 14 Dec 95 p 3

[Report by Andrey Rakul, Aleksandra Yemtseva, Nail Abdullin, and Dmitriy Kamyshev: "Predictable Voters of an Unpredictable Region"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted]

The Heritage of the Past and the Mistakes of the Present

[passage omitted] On the whole, the situation in the Northern Caucasus can be described as stably tense. If in many other Russian regions stability is threatened first of all by economic circumstances, the main destabilizing factor here remains politics or, to be more precise, the nationalities question. It is growing in importance even further in connection with what has in recent years become a bustling process of reviving the Cossacks, who make up a noticeable share of the region's Russian-speaking population and who lay claim to the role of the main protector of the Russians in Northern Caucasus.

Of All Peoples, the Cossacks Are the Most Important for Us

[passage omitted] Naturally, in Northern Caucasus, particularly in traditionally mostly Cossack-populated Stavropol and Krasnodar Krays and Rostov Oblast, the Cossack factor can be considered as one of the most important elements making the difference in the preelection situation. This is confirmed, first of all, by increasing attention paid to the Cossacks by the authorities and political parties. The most successful of them in this regard has been "Russia Is Our Home"

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[NDR], which has lured the Union of Cossacks to join it as a collective member. This does not mean, however, that all the Cossacks will back the premier's bloc: Given the abundance of rival Cossack organizations and parties laying claim to the Cossacks' votes, it is now difficult to say what choice the Cossacks may make. [passage omitted]

It Matters Not What Party It Is As Long As It Is Headed by a Good Man

From the point of view of predictability of the results of the upcoming State Duma elections, all regions of the Northern Caucasus can be divided into three groups. The first group features Chechnya, where it is impossible to predict not only how the elections will end, but even if they will be held at all. The second group comprises most Northern Caucasus republics, where the situation is fairly confidently controlled by the local authorities, and the outcome of the elections in most cases depends on which political forces a republic's authorities sympathize with. The sympathies, which are not particularly diverse, are split almost evenly between the Communists, the Agrarians, and the NDR.

A much more interesting situation appears to have come about in the third group made up of the oblasts and krays of the Northern Caucasus, where the views of local bosses do not count for that much and the campaigning of Moscow activists is not as intense as in neighboring republics. In Rostov Oblast, for instance, there is approximately one party for every 100,000 residents. The front-runners in the electoral race, however, are the same as in Russia as a whole: the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF], the largest in numerical terms and (taking account of its followers in many governmental organizations) fairly influential; the NDR, which traditionally relies on active support by heads of administrations; and "Yabloko," which is holding out in the lead group mainly thanks to its leader (Grigoriy Yavlinskiy's personal approval rating was 27 percent in November).

Rostov pollsters also point out a noticeable growth in the number of people supporting PRES [Party for Russian Unity and Accord], which is also directly attributable to the stepped-up activity of its leader, Sergey Shakhray, who is running in a single-seat constituency there. Clearly, the deputy prime minister, who remains a welcome guest at any public event in the oblast, relies on formidable information support in the local media, which, naturally, also affects the rating of his party. They also note the low popularity of the national patriots and Liberal Democrats, which appears particularly striking against the backdrop of the 1993 triumph of the LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia] in Rostov.

The latest polls in neighboring Krasnodar Kray have also produced paradoxical results: Although nearly 60 percent of the respondents think that they have not become worse-off materially, approximately the same percentage of Kuban Region residents do not support the Russian leadership's policy. Against this background, it is only understandable why Krasnodar voters clearly prefer the CPRF to the NDR. At the same time, many voters are inclined to vote for a person whom they trust, not a party; according to another poll, both Chernomyrdin and Yavlinskiy have chances in such a contest. In any case, analysts do not think that the vote on party lists or elections in single-seat constituencies in the Northern Caucasus will be surprising.

[article includes the following boxed table]

Answers by Krasnodar residents to questionnaires in a survey conducted at the request of the "Rating" program of the "Pioner" television and radio station

Percentage of voters inclined to vote for:

CPRF	15.5 percent
LDPR	11.3 percent
APR	9.7 percent
NDR	8.3 percent
"Yabloko"	8.3 percent
a leader whom they trust	33.2 percent

Politicians eliciting the greatest confidence among Krasnodar voters:

Grigoriy Yavlinskiy	16.5 percent
Viktor Chernomyrdin	15.5 percent
Aleksandr Rutskoy	14.1 percent
Sergey Shakhray	13.3 percent
Gennadiy Zyuganov	12.5 percent

'Clandestine' Poll Suggests High Voter Turnout

LD1512110395

[FBIS Editorial Report] Moscow NTV in Russian at 2120 GMT on 14 December carries the "Versions" program and an eight-minute report on a "clandestine" poll carried out by the Public Opinion Foundation, which suggests a high turnout for the 17 December parliamentary elections in Russia. Indications are that last-minute decisions will account for more than a

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fifth of the vote. Equally "clandestine" soundings put Communist Party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov in the lead and suggest Aleksandr Lebed's star is on the wane.

Announcer Sergey Dorenko reminds viewers that public opinion polls relating to the elections could not be published after 8 December. The program's regular Thursday public opinion poll slot would therefore be an underground affair, with Dorenko pretending to be ill and therefore not responsible for his actions, should there be legal consequences.

Yelena Petrenko of the Public Opinion Foundation reports that according to a poll taken on 9 December, 74 percent of the electorate intend to turn out and vote on 17 December, compared with 71.6 percent according to the 2 December poll. Of those polled, 8.1 percent doubt they will vote [9.5 percent on 2 December] and 16.2 percent definitely do not intend to vote [16.8 percent].

In the 9 December poll, 22.9 percent of those polled said they were undecided who to vote for; comparative figures on 2 December and 25 November were 21.1 and 18.4 percent respectively.

People were also asked how far leading politicians reflect the interests of the electorate, and whether they are honest and decent people. The figures were as follows — [first column indicates the percentage of those polled who thought the politician reflected their interests, second column shows the percentage of those polled who thought he or she was honest and decent]:

1. Gennadiy Zyuganov	13.8	10.1
2. Grigoriy Yavlinskiy	13.0	10.6
3. Aleksandr Lebed	12.7	12.5
4. Svetoslav Fedorov	10.6	10.7
5. Viktor Chernomyrdin	9.5	5.6
6. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy	9.1	4.5
7. Ella Pamfilova	7.1	7.0
8. Boris Fedorov	7.1	5.4
9. Yegor Gaydar	6.4	4.5
10. Nikolay Ryzhkov	5.7	5.6

Dorenko points out that Lebed's popularity rating as an honest man — his charisma rating, as Dorenko puts it — was higher six weeks ago, and he has yielded his overall popularity rating to Yavlinskiy. Zhirinovskiy has also moved up the list.

According to political scientist Igor Bunin, interviewed in the studio, the Communists would get between 140-160 seats in the new Duma. Only four parties will get into the Duma for sure, he said: the Communist Party, Russia Is Our Home, Women of Russia, and Yabloko. The question now is how the seats will be distributed between these.

TV Journalists Interview Chernomyrdin

MM1412171495 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 15 Dec 95 p 3

[Account by A. Andreyev of interview with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin by unidentified television journalists; place and date not given: "Face to Face Talk: V. Chernomyrdin and Television Journalists. Turning People Against the Government in Order To Win the Elections — That Is What Irresponsible Politicians and Useless Administrators of Every Hue Are Gambling on. Well, If It Works, They Win. But Do the People Win?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It would be nice, when all is said and done, to get away from reciting statistics and percentages — although statistics are facts, too — and to trace the purely human tones of this conversation. To sum up, somehow or other, more than nine hours of conversation at close range — not with a large audience in a spacious auditorium, stock still in front of the speaker's rostrum, but within the range of the most natural voice.

The journalists, indeed, were beginning to get irritable, waiting for the premier to arrive an hour or two after the appointed time. But here is a man who, even at 9.30 in the evening, after numerous meetings, discussions, and government events, his face gray with fatigue, still turns up for the conversation, although he could have pleaded exhaustion and left for home. And it was immediately apparent that while we were kicking our heels here, he was not taking it easy either, and the premier's schedule is really frantic.

He is sometimes gloomy, agitated, and very worried about something or other, and sometimes, on the contrary, more genial and smiling — in short, not a machine, not a robot, but a normal person bearing the imprint of all his current experiences. Thus it is all the more noticeable that he has the capacity, for all his outward appearance of impermeable solidity and imperviousness (that massive experience of responsible Soviet work), to get involved in the question, to be emotionally affected, moved, and touched. Naturally, for each group the premier's apparatus prepares the necessary prompt sheets — all the same, he has had to plow his way through more than 50 regions with their sensitive

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areas, problems, and prospects. But it is obvious even to the untrained eye that talking from prompt sheets goes against the grain for Chernomyrdin; even if he takes a prompt as his starting point, he moves on to a direct monologue based on his own experience. And he is not afraid sometimes to admit honestly: "I don't know the exact situation here, I must find out from your governor and my deputies...."

Wherever you go there are many problems, not to say disasters, but there are questions which, so to speak, hit you in the guts.

[Unidentified journalist] "People say that our state does not care about the North and the Far East, that it has set a course of uprooting people and going over to the tour-of-duty method of work everywhere. Transport costs have increased out of all proportion with wages — can people expect the government to impose concessionary rates for the Far Easterners? Why has the law on output sharing, which could promote cooperation with foreign companies, not been brought in yet?"

The premier does not immediately find words for his reply — you can see his words, the strongest words, first "bubbling up" inside before coming to the surface.

[Chernomyrdin] "Such statements are either stupid, or else somebody wants to stir up the Far Easterners and turn them against the government, when we've got enough problems without that.... Two-thirds of our country is either the 'land of the North Winds,' or regions equivalent to the North. But this is Russia, it is vast and diverse, so what are we supposed to do, jettison them because of that? As for profitability, again, out of 89 regions we only have 27 that live without subsidies, we can't just get rid of the majority because of that."

And he goes on more calmly, thoroughly, in detail, about everything to do with the "North Winds," especially since a presidential edict has been signed on the creation of a special state committee for the management of the Northern regions. Nobody has any intention of destroying major built-up areas, on the contrary, everything must be done to make places that are rich in minerals and have a good climate attractive for living in. "But it is true that we are not planning to build cities at the North Pole, we will develop the tour-of-duty method where it is justified." He does not make easy promises: Alas, the territory is vast, transportation is difficult too — if tariffs are reduced, they will stop carrying us. But there is another way — to facilitate links with western regions not through tariffs, but through a system of additional payments to Far Easterners and Northerners.

The delay in the law on output sharing, without which it is difficult to cooperate with foreign partners, prompts a mournful: "That's above everything.... Such a lack of understanding!" The point is that the government has drafted the law, the State Duma has adopted it, but the **Federation Council is blocking it.** "I want that law above everything, it removes a lot of problems in the progress of contracts like 'Sakhalin-2.' Boris Nikolayevich and I have discussed what to do: The Duma was unable to overrule the veto. As a last resort the president will issue an edict, but these are half-measures again, we can't always live like this, we must live by laws!"

At the other end of Russia they have their own misfortunes.

[Unidentified journalist] "Viktor Stepanovich, you worked for many years in the oil and gas complex, our number one exporter. In our Tambov Oblast, more than 10 gas pipelines go to the West. Yet only 10 percent of the villages and rayons have a gas supply. Is this right, and does the government know about it?"

[Chernomyrdin] "Of course it does, at a session of the 'Chernozemye' association in Kursk recently, which I took part in, this was talked about all the time. And I, as former minister for the gas complex, was really uncomfortable with these people, although I remember very well how we allocated money for construction and could not take a single step to right or left. They've plowed up the whole of Russia, they've made mighty corridors in the center, yet people go on for decades not knowing what a gas stove is. In the countryside as a whole, 6 percent have gas supplies, and countrywide the figure is 14 percent! And this is Russia, where all the gas comes from! Yet look at Uzbekistan — there, this indicator is 86 percent; in Azerbaijan it's 92 percent, and in the Baltic states it's almost 100 percent! I was in Kashka-Darya Oblast in Uzbekistan — arid desert, like the Sahara, but I was amazed at the fine roads and airports! Yet we have none of that!"

Nonetheless there is a program for the provision of gas supplies, there are pipes, there are plans. The government intends to help the Russian backwoods by selling some of its 'Gazprom' shares and putting the money into a special-purpose account for the provision of gas supplies in the countryside. And in general the state, the premier believes, should take on the full range of amenities: Hard-surfaced roads, gas, electricity, water, and sewerage should be brought to every settlement. "People can do the rest for themselves, just give them the basic conditions! This work is already going well in Lipetsk Oblast now, they understand the prospects there!"

In Kaluga (and not only there, of course) they are worried that funds for the elimination of the consequences

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of the Chernobyl accident have stopped arriving from the center and only come out of oblast coffers. No, Chernomyrdin parries, everything to do with that accident comes under the state's responsibility. And funds are still being allocated by the center. With just one amendment: The oblast, instead of sending its contributions to the center, hither and thither, only to get them back again, now retains the "Chernobyl share" for itself straight away.

"What should we do with our military-industrial complex?" This question was asked by Khabarovsk, Vladimir, Kaluga, the Urals, and Siberia.... "Help us, we are down on our knees."

On their knees? This entirely heartfelt protest by an experienced engineer and economic manager is obvious. The potential, the mighty cadres, the technological standards, the ability to resolve unimaginable technical tasks — on their knees?

The premier is well aware of these plants' plight — no orders, no wages. But you should also understand the country's plight, stemming from its own happiness: We no longer need such volumes of defense industry output. What we need is cost-effective civilian output like, for example, miniworkshops and minilines for the production of sausage, pasta products, dairy and bakery products, and sundry pickled and smoked foods, which will have an impact primarily on food supplies. "I was recently offered such equipment even by a business woman from India: Take it, she said, any family in your country will be able to operate it. It was truly wonderful equipment, and I felt ashamed that we are sitting on top of our metals, our technologies, and our design and production cadres and are unable to offer our people the same. It is time to give to defense industry enterprises state orders for defense output that is actualiy needed and release their resources for national economic tasks. This tough work is now being done in conjunction with the Ministry of Defense and the State Committee for the Defense Sectors of Industry. But this year the government is paying in full all its defense order debts, as well as the funds promised for conversion purposes."

Chernomyrdin the marketeer and Chernomyrdin the statesman — who is stronger? Many people have been keen to learn the answer ever since his famous statement: "I am in favor of the market, but against the bazaar." It is best to seek the answer in each specific situation and not to draw conclusions for the sake of an overall tag. This is what he had to say about car makers demanding customs concessions for our vehicles: "People do not buy them? Quite right, too! Why should I prevent our people driving nice cars, like the rest of the world? Make good cars and people will buy them! There is no alternative, it is time this was realized. And this can be overcom by reaching new standards of quality." This, incidentally, is why, the premier went on to add, the world's best car manufacturers have come here, to the former tractor plant in Elabug, to build a whole series of first-class cars. More than 100 Russian plants will cooperate with them and will gain orders.

Wages are the scourge of God. The government took advantage of the very first improvements in the economic situation to repay debts owed by the budget — pensions which, incidentally, this year increased for the first time faster than inflation, the wages of teachers, physicians, and servicemen, and students' grants. But enterprises are a different story, the premier claims, many have already been privatized and many of them have no ties with the budget, they are tied to the results of their own labor. And they should be answerable to their own workers according to all the rules of economic regulation.

Is it not dreadful that the shares of such enterprises end up in the hands of private banks and commercial structures? No, this is not dreadful but only logical, since this development provides a source of investment and participation by large-scale capital in industrial renewal. Of course, subject to compliance with the laws and legal monitoring.

Another scourge is the disconnection of power supplies, the vicious circle of reciprocal debts when it is impossible to figure out who owes what to whom, while people sit out the winter in cold and darkness. "Help us for God's sake, Viktor Stepanovich, life is impossible!" — people in the Far East are almost on the verge of tears. "Is it not time to renationalize the fuel and energy complex?" — middle Russia moans.

"What do you mean, renationalize?" The premier is amazed. "It has not even been privatized yet. Everything to do with the energy industry are base sectors, they have been and still remain in the state's hands, we are in favor of a state monopoly because they would not function under any other regime. Look: Everybody owes it debts running into trillions, nobody has the money to settle, but energy is still available. The energy industry itself finds it difficult, we have frozen electricity prices, and it is acquiring everything it needs already at prices which are higher than world prices. Nonetheless, vast funds have been and will be invested in the energy industry's development."

He makes a firm promise to put an end to the outrage of disconnecting electricity supplies to homes. But not at any price, if truth be said: Existing debts will be frozen and taken into account during reciprocal settlements,

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especially within regions and departments; it would be better not to incur fresh debts.

One last word to voters before the elections, especially to those in the "red belt" where communist feelings are particularly strong.

"I cannot tell everyone for whom to vote, for which party or movement. This is a matter of each person's beliefs and conscience. But I would like to warn them against a situation whereby just one-third of Russia's population would turn out to vote and determine the future of the vast majority who kept away. Therefore, come out and vote. But think properly, of course.... This is what I would say to the 'red belt': Yes, you remember the guarantees given by Soviet power: bread at 20 kopecks a loaf, wages at 120 rubles, cheap sausage for which you had to ride the commuter trains into Moscow. But this will no longer suit you today. I have traveled all over the place, I am familiar with history, I have seen how people live and work. I am convinced that there are no prosperous 'red belts' anywhere in the world. There is normal civilized life, but according to this principle: If you work well, you are bound to live well! We must reinstate this principle in Russia, and we will reinstate it without fail. The people have more than enough energy and talents, the country has more than enough resources for this purpose. But we have had enough of new specters of communism, revolutions, and shocks, let us work calmly...."

"You are a source of confidence and strength," the journalists noted at the end of the conversation, and Chernomyrdin replied in his own style:

"What would you have me do, inspire weakness? Who needs such a chairman of the government?... I have spent three years as premier, and already feel that it has been an eternity...."

Chernomyrdin Discusses Army Election Issues

MM1412150795 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 14 Dec 95 pp 1, 3

[Unattributed interview with Russian Federation Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin; place and date not given: "We Have Learned Not Only To Survive, But To Build. Russian Federation Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin Answers KRASNAYA ZVEZDA's Questions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] Viktor Stepanovich, naturally the state of our Army today is directly connected with the general political and socioeconomic processes in the country. But the Army, unlike, say, the sphere of industry or agriculture, is totally dependent on politics. It is unable and not entitled to become "private" and try in that way to emerge from the crisis or at least to keep "afloat"...

[Chernomyrdin] You are right. And maybe that is why the "army card" is constantly cropping up in the hands of virtually all today's political players. Various forces are trying to politicize the Army and turn it into an arena for the election fight. But — and I am absolutely certain of this — the political struggle must not be allowed to penetrate the actual barracks and military camps. That would do irremediable damage to the unity of the troop collectives.

At the same time I am wholly and entirely in favor of intelligent and sensible military men becoming Duma deputies — people who are capable of effectively upholding, at the level of the legislative power, the interests both of the Army itself and of the country's defense capability in general. One would only hope that, when sitting in parliament and "lobbying" for the Army's interests, they will take into account the general socioeconomic and political situation in the country.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] It is hard, Viktor Stepanovich, to think on a countrywide scale when many officers have no housing and are not receiving their wages, when soldiers are "existing" on an extremely meager food ration and military facilities on an equally meager energy ration. Does the country's leadership realize that this is undermining Russia's national security, and at the same time creating within the country a broad stratum of dissatisfied and — most important — armed people?

[Chernomyrdin] As chairman of the government, I am able to state with full authority that the country's leadership is fully aware of the role and place of the Army and Navy in ensuring Russia's national security. All problems connected with this matter are under constant supervision and, believe me, we are trying to resolve them by all the means at our disposal.

That does not mean, of course, that there is nothing to criticize the government for today; indeed, it should be criticized. But one would wish the criticism to be well-founded and constructive.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] But the Army's situation really is disastrous today. Who, if not the government, can complaints be addressed to?

[Chernomyrdin] Let us look at the situation not from the viewpoint of an individual military subunit, but as a whole.

We have carried out the redeployment of our foreign military groupings in a very short space of time. World

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experience has seen nothing comparable to this large-scale operation — more than 1 million servicemen and over 45,000 items of combat hardware have returned to Russia. Could the mistakes and miscalculations that are apparent today have been prevented? Probably. But given the foreign policy situation, we did not really have any alternative. After all, it was not only a question of fulfilling international commitments undertaken earlier, but also of our servicemen, the attitude toward whom was becoming worse and worse every day in the "occupied" countries.

Add to that the withdrawal of components of the strategic nuclear forces from Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine, the problems associated with the destruction of various types of arms, and the general reduction in the numerical strength of the Army and Navy. The government has sought every possible means of funding this whole large-scale transformation of the Armed Forces. But the budget is not elastic.

Especially since the legislative authority was also demanding that the government ensure financial support for the laws and programs adopted by it. And these not infrequently had more to do with populism and a nod in the direction of the voters, rather than taking into account the state's real potential.

Our duty to the officers and soldiers of the serving Army and Navy is great. We also have a duty to those who have been discharged to the reserve in connection with the Armed Forces cuts and do not have suitable housing conditions to this day. But let us not forget that these are not only our debts, but also the legacy that we inherited from the party-directive system. In many ways we are paying today for the excessive military might which virtually the entire Soviet economy worked to create.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] In the last elections both civilian and military candidates felt bound to devote space to Armed Forces problems in their programs. The Army and Navy were promised support, funding, and priority attention. New elections mean new promises. On what, Viktor Stepanovich, do you base your confidence that what is being proclaimed today by the "Russia Is Our Home" movement, which you head, will be fulfilled tomorrow?

[Chernomyrdin] What we are proposing is based on three years' experience of mistakes and successes. We have learned not only to survive, but to build. The economic foundations have been laid for this, and the legislative base has been created. The State Commission on Military Organizational Development has been created, and the "Basic Guidelines for Military Organizational Development in the Russian Federation" have been drawn up and approved by edict of the Russian Federation president. In the first stage — through the year 2000 — structural changes and the stabilization of Russia's military-industrial potential are to be carried out. In the second — by 2005 — it is planned to complete the rearming of the Armed Forces and the structural reorganization of military industry.

But the main thing is that an opportunity has arisen today to ensure financial support for these tasks. The Russian Federation budget for 1996 incorporates considerably higher volumes of national defense funding compared with previous years. The government has succeeded in demonstrating that this expenditure should total not less than 5 percent of GDP, as is customary in world practice. In recent years a total of more than 50 legislative acts have been adopted that directly or indirectly concern problems of the Army and the social protection of servicemen. I would like to repeat yet again that by no means all of these were adopted on the basis of the real potential of the federal budget. But the government, as the executive authority, was forced to take on the implementation of these legislative acts and the responsibility for their fulfillment.

Today the situation is changing. The government has succeeded in finding additional sources of finance, which has made it possible to draw up a rigorous schedule for extinguishing the federal budget's debt to the Army. Furthermore, the government has the firm intention of including funds destined for the construction of housing for servicemen in the Federal Investment Program. And that will be an additional guarantee that the money will be allocated on time and spent only for the designated purposes.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] Viktor Stepanovich, you have told us what has already been done or will be done in the near future to tackle priority problems, perhaps the most pressing ones. But we would like to know your vision, as government chairman, of the future of our country's Armed Forces.

[Chernomyrdin] As I have already said, expenditure on defense will have to increase. Not in order to increase troop numbers, but to improve their training and maintenance, to ensure priority funding of defense research and development, and to rearm the Army and Navy. The Russian state and Russian democracy exist and are growing stronger. They must be protected, which is why reliable defenses and up-to-date Armed Forces are needed. But since today's international and domestic political realities dictate first and foremost the use of political and diplomatic methods of ensuring security, the formation of our Armed Forces should be based primarily on improving their qualitative parameters.

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The foundations for this work have already been laid. Certain components (for instance, a mixed — draft and contract — system of manning, and peacekeeping groupings of Russian troops) have already been tried, but the main work of military reform is still to come.

And here the government is counting on the active involvement of military scientists and specialists. There are more than 20 scientific and theoretical centers active in Russia today in connection with the problems of military reform. But their potential is insufficiently exploited and often their scientific output in the sphere of military organizational development is not utilized. It is time really to pool the efforts of politicians and legislators, military theorists and practitioners, economists and financiers. Then and only then can we be sure that all the calculations and plans relating to military reform will be in line with the real domestic and foreign political situation and the state's real economic potential.

And another thing. In tackling problems of maintaining the serving Army, it is incumbent on us to think about who is going to succeed the present command personnel. Whatever it costs, we must give all-around support to military schools and academies and preserve the teaching and scientific potential of the Russian system of military education, which is rightly regarded as one of the best in the world.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] Viktor Stepanovich, at the beginning of our conversation you urged that the political struggle not be allowed to penetrate the actual barracks and military camps. Does that mean that the Army, the servicemen, should be outside politics?

[Chernomyrdin] The Armed Forces cannot be allowed to become a "bargaining counter" in anyone's political game, they must be subordinate only to the country's supreme commander in chief, who acts in accordance with the Constitution. Attempts to disunite the Army along the lines of political sympathies and antipathies will result in the weakening of the country and its defenselessness.

At the same time the military, like all the other citizens of Russia, are entitled to elect and to be elected to the organs of power. In the elections every soldier and officer, naturally, will decide for himself who to vote for. In other situations (except, of course, in his private life) the military man, in my view, should always vote for the party of "Military Honor and Duty to the Motherland and the Oath."

Early Military Voters Support Parties Seeking Stability

MM1412160295 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 14 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Aleksandr Pelts: "For a Future Without Upheavals. Early Voting Has Already Taken Place in a Number of Units and Subunits"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports about this have come in primarily from garrisons in Siberia and the Far East, as well as certain Northern Fleet ships.

As we know, the Law on Elections envisages the right of voters who are servicemen to vote early. And, as reports from the localities show, it has been used in a number of cases in the present situation. Representatives of the relevant electoral commissions arrived in the units and subunits, and, having ensured all the necessary conditions for a secret vote, sealed the portable ballot boxes. They will be opened in the morning of 17 December at polling places in the presence of members of the electoral commission, observers, and representatives of participants in the election race.

And so, in the Northern Fleet, the crews of ships participating in the expedition to the Mediterranean Sea, where they will be involved in an operation of multinational NATO forces in the Balkans, have also already voted. This means officers and seamen from the heavy aircraft carrying cruiser Admiral Kuznetsov, and accompanying ships, which will also be carrying out combat tasks far away from their country's shores in the next few months.

Our senior permanent correspondent for the Pacific Fleet, Captain Second Rank Nikolay Litkovets, also reports on early voting in a number of military units. The personnel of the rescue ship the Alagez, which is on hourly readiness to put to sea to search of the missing Tu-154 civilian airliner, voted 10 December. The early voting on board the ship was organized, in coordination with the fleet command, in the presence of representatives of the Vladivostok city Pervomayskiy Rayon electoral commission. It must be stressed, our correspondent notes, that this is the first time that the Pacific Fleet seamen will not be voting at closed polling places. And another important clarification. Some news agencies have reported that the crews of ships participating in the search have also participated in the vote. However, this is not the case. The two ships which are involved in the search in the Tatar Strait will return to their bases by the morning of 16 December. So their crews will vote "without special treatment."

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Servicemen at certain subunits in the Far East Military District troops have also already voted. The reason is the same: around-the-clock searches for the missing airplane and the uncertainty as to the continuation of the search operation.

According to preliminary information, based on the statements made by the voters, as we were told by the Russian Federation Ministry of Defense task force for preparing and conducting the elections, a great many voters prefer the candidates and political movements whose programs are aimed at maintaining stability in the country, and a future without upheavals and without extremism. However, let us recall that the exact data on the results of the vote will only become known after the results of the 17 December ballot.

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ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 15 Dec

LD1512081895 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0737 GMT 15 Dec 95

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 15 (Itar-Tass) — ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI on the signing of the Bosnian peace agreement in Paris.

"We regard this act as a big stride towards a settlement of the most sanguinary conflict on the post-war Europe," Grigoriy Karasin, Head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Information and Press Directorate, writes in an article on the subject.

"There is every ground to assert that the Yugoslav leaders — Slobodan Milosevic, Franjo Tudjman, Alija Izetbegovic — notwithstanding the difficulties which they had to overcome on their way to agreement were intent on achieving a lasting peaceful settlement that would meet the vital interests of the peoples.

"However, it would be wrong to think that the desired goal has been achieved and one may rest on one's laurels. Sober-minded politicians emphasise that only a realistic possibility of peace in the region has been created so far. The peace process is going on. To come to a stop now would mean to get stuck halfway," Karasin points out.

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI on the incumbent parliament.

Estimating the composition of the incumbent parliament, State Duma Speaker Ivan Rybkin has told the newspaper that 40 per cent of members have scientific degrees and knowledge, experience in management, jurisprudence, sociology and politology. Every tenth member is a professor or an Academician.

"Forty per cent of the incumbent members will be re-elected to the Duma. The restless nature of the Parliament is well-known, just as grim statistics: eight deaths over the past two years. Four Duma members were killed, one died in a motor accident, three died a natural death and only one of them died in advanced age."

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI on forecasts for the forthcoming election outcome.

There will be no great surprises, said Mark Urnov, Head of the Analytical Department to the President of the Russian Federation.

All analytical studies indicate that there will be a high voter turn-out on the polling day — December 17. Turnout estimates vary but they manifest a common upward trend.

Up to 65 per cent of the electorate will supposedly go to the polls.

IZVESTIYA on the preparedness of electoral commissions for Duma elections.

More than 96,000 electoral commissions of all levels are ready for polling. This was announced at an All-Russia hook-up teleconference on December 14. Speaking at the teleconference, Chief of the Presidential Staff Sergey Filatov assigned the task of securing that as many voters as possible take part in the polling.

IZVESTIYA on a called-off air traffic controllers' strike.

An All-Russia air traffic controllers' strike, which was scheduled for Decemvber 15, has been called off. A. Travnikov, Head of the Association of air-navigation service enterprises, has told the newspaper that an opinion poll taken among the air traffic control services has revealed that their personnel did not support a "protest action" contemplated by the leadership of the Federaiton of Air Traffic Controllers' Unions.

IZVESTIYA on the disappearance of three SU-27 aircraft in Vietnam.

The disappearance of the three SU-27 aircraft, which were on their way home after participating in the LIMA-95 international air show in Malaysia, is a continuation of the series of mysterious vanishings and crashes of Russian civilian and military aircraft.

Scant information reaching here form the Russian embassy in Hanoi, which has no contact with Cam Ranh and from the Air Force Press Centre does not make it possible to reconstruct a more or less general picutre of what happened.

It still remains a mystery why two aircraft from the escort group separated from the main group when approaching Cam Ranh and landed at an airfield in the town of Phan Rang located 40 kilometres to the south. Neither is it clear why the leader aircraft landed safely at Cam Ranh while the jetfighters were unable to do that. Instead, they flew four laps over the peninsula.

Experts plead the lack of modern navigation equipment at Cam Ranh as one of the causes of the disaster. However, the lack of navigation equipment did not prevent the heavy IL-76 to land there, although its landing run is much longer than that of a jetfighter.

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Chernomyrdin Hails Signing of Dayton Peace Agreement

LD1412150395 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1411 GMT 14 Dec 95

[By Mikhail Kalmykov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] PARIS, December 14 (Itar-Tass) — The signing of the Bosnia peace agreement has become a historic event. It puts an end to the most sanguinary conflict in Europe since the times of the Second World War, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said on Thursday in his remarks at a Elysee Palace ceremony to sign the Final Document of the International peace conference on the former Yugoslavia.

However hard-achieved the accords are, they meet the interests of peace, the interests of everyone, the Russian Premier said. The agreement puts immense responsibility not only on the sides involved in the conflict but also on all states drawn into the peace process in the former Yugoslavia. One should display will and resolve to overcome the negative consequences of the war and through joint efforts restore peaceful life in the region, Chernomyrdin pointed out.

Having emphasised that Russia will go ahead with the policy of strengthening peace and security in the Balkans, Chernomyrdin called for coordinating the actions of international organisations, such as, primarily, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations Organisation, in asserting peace.

The Russian Premier described as nonsensical the maintenance of the regime of sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia under present-day conditions and called for lifting them immediately.

Upbeat on Bosnia Peace Prospects

LD1412232295 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1654 GMT 14 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Mikhail Kalmykov and Igor Shchegolev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Paris, 14 Dec — "There is hope for peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, that was the impression I got from my meetings with the leaders of all the former Yugoslav republics," Viktor Chernomyrdin, the head of the Russian Government, told journalists today.

After the signing ceremony of the agreement on peace in Bosnia, in the Elysee Palace, he attended a lunch given by French President Jacques Chirac at the Foreign Ministry building for all the participants in the Paris peace conference.

V. Chernomyrdin described as highly important the peace agreement, which was signed by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, and Alija Izetbegovic, president of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Presidency. Together with the leaders of the United States, France, Britain, Germany and — on behalf of the EU — Spain, the Russian prime minister witnessed the signing of an historic document that draws a line under three and a half years of fratricidal conflict in Bosnia.

Naturally, "it is not as simple as that," he conceded, and Russia realizes that there will be considerable difficulties involved in the implementation of the agreement. Despite this, Viktor Chernomyrdin remains optimistic.

Chernomyrdin, Chirac Discuss Bosnia, European Security

LD1412185895 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1746 GMT 14 Dec 95

[by ITAR-TASS correspondents Mikhail Kalmykov and Igor Shchegolev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Paris, 14 Dec — A meeting at the Elysee Palace between French President Jacques Chirac and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, which lasted much longer than scheduled, was devoted to the problems of European security and the peace settlement in former Yugoslavia. An ITAR-TASS correspondent has learned this from diplomatic sources close to the Elysee.

The French president reiterated his gratitude for the assistance provided by the Russian leadership in freeing two French pilots whose plane was shot down by the Bosnian Serbs at the end of August during a NATO airstrike.

Jacques Chirac expressed his view on the structure of European security which, in his opinion, should comprise three main elements: the North Atlantic alliance, the European bulwark, and Russia, with which, he said, it is desirable to establish and consolidate relations of real partnership.

During the meeting both sides demonstrated a similar analysis of the situation in former Yugoslavia and drew attention to the practical moves to implement the peace agreement for a settlement in Bosnia which was signed today. In their opinion, the document requires "close interaction" of all the parties and countries involved in the settlement process.

The Russian prime minister told journalists that at his meeting with Jacques Chirac they discussed joint actions to implement the peace agreement. "This is one of the

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main tasks facing us and I think that the leaders of the two countries will do everything possible in this respect," Viktor Chernomyrdin said.

An ITAR-TASS correspondent has learned from well-informed sources that in conclusion, the head of the Russian Federation government told the host of the Elysee in detail about the internal political situation in Russia on the eve of the elections to the State Duma.

Report: Sarajevo Serbs' Opinion No Longer Counts

MM1412140295 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 14 Dec 95 p 3

[Report by Mikhail Zheglov: "Serbs Say 'No.' But Their Opinion No Longer Seems To Interest Anyone"]

[FBIS Translated Text] All the adult population in the Serb quarter of Sarajevo went to the polls 12 December to express their view of the Dayton agreement on the Bosnia peace settlement. To be more accurate, that section of the agreement whereby the Serbs are ordered to renounce their autonomy and submit to Muslim-Croat Federation Government organs.

However, the outcome of the referendum could have been foreseen with certainty. Analysts thought that 90 percent would oppose the Dayton agreement. In actual fact the figure reached 98.8 percent, but this result no longer has any role to play: The Bosnia peace agreement will be signed in Paris 14 December. And the 120,000 Serb population will have to either submit or leave the city.

The second option is the most likely. Recently official representatives of the Bosnian Government said that Serb servicemen living in the "united" city will not be welcomed. And if you consider that every Serb family in Sarajevo has men serving in the army, one cannot doubt that they will leave the city. Admittedly, the UNHCR has decided to open missions in a number of Serb quarters of Sarajevo to ensure that the Serb population feels secure. But specialists believe that this will hardly stop those who have decided to settle scores with their sworn enemies — the Serbs.

Chernomyrdin: Yeltsin Handled Talks on French Pilots

LD1412135495 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1056 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Moscow, Dec. 14 (TANJUG) — Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin said before leaving for Paris to attend the Bosnia peace agreement signing ceremony that the talks about the release of French pilots had been held on demand and under personal control of Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev left for Paris together with Chernomyrdin.

Russian officials have said that during his one-day visit to Paris, Chernomyrdin will talk with French President Jacques Chirac and U.S. President Bill Clinton.

The Russian prime minister took along Yeltsin's personal note for the French president, sources close to the Russian Government said.

Russian diplomatic sources say that the Bosnia peace process will not end with the ceremony of signing the peace document, but that it will open new courses and determine further international obligations.

Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said that international meetings on Bosnia would resume next year and that one of these conferences would be held in Moscow.

The agenda of and participants in the conference will depend on the most prominent concrete circumstances and problems, Ivanov told Russian media on Wednesday, at the end of the first day of the Paris conference.

Ivanov said that an invitation to Presidents Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia and Franjo Tudjman of Croatia and Bosnian Muslim leader Alija Izetbegovic to meet in Moscow was still in force.

The tripartite summit was scheduled to be held in Moscow before the beginning of the Dayton peace talks, but was postponed because of the illness of Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who would sponsor the meeting.

NATO Expansion Equated With Cuban Missile Crisis

MM1412135695 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1100 GMT 4 Dec 95

[From the "Vesti" newscast: Video report from Kaliningrad Oblast by G. Sablin, identified by caption; figures in brackets denote broadcast time in GMT in hours, minutes, and seconds]

[FBIS Translated Text] [110338] [Sablin over video of port scenes, visiting U.S. delegation] Linton Brooks, roving ambassador of the U.S. State Department and vice president of the navy analysis center, expressed profound satisfaction with the results of a visit by a U.S. military delegation to the Baltic Fleet's main base.

Wide-ranging issues pertaining to the strengthening of contacts between the Russian and the U.S. Navies were

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discussed during meetings with the Baltic Fleet command. The Russian side expressed concern over possible NATO expansion to the east. The implementation of such plans, in the opinion of military analysts, could affect Russian-American relations in the same way as the deployment of Russian missiles in Cuba at the time.

Increased housing constuction for ex-servicemen under the U.S. program of the Agency for International Development was also discussed at the meeting.

Lebed Offers Cure for NATO Enlargement Plans

LD1412174495 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1332 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 14 (Interfax) — Russia must take a tough and unequivocal position in the event of any NATO enlargement to the east, one of the leaders of the Congress of Russian Communities (KRO) Lt. Gen. Aleksandr Lebed said.

If the process of NATO enlargement eastwards continues, Russia could respond by denouncing a number of international agreements, he said in a speech to a meeting of voters in Moscow on Thursday. If this does not help, he added, it could revert to the policy of nuclear deterrence and start creating a new defense union.

Lebed said unlike Russia, western countries had something to lose. On the diplomatic front, he said the government must proceed from a principle saying "Russia is above all else for Russians." At the same time, he said Russia would have friendly ties and trade contacts with all states in the event of KRO victory.

The general said Russia was in need of a firm, clever and caring government. "We must again become a great nation, we are Russians and must be reckoned with," he said.

Lebed said the country was also in need of a strong army because the next century would witness a repartitioning of the world with the potentially-wealthy Russia being the main prey.

Our correspondent says the general continued his speech when the light was suddenly switched off for about ten minutes at a cinema hall in central Moscow where the meeting was taking place.

Regret Over U.S. Decision To Quit UN Body

LD1412170795 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1552 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 14 (Interfax) - Russia regrets the U.S. decision to leave the U.N. industrial Development Organization, or UNIDO, as of December 31, 1996, Grigoriy Karasin, an official spokesman for the Russian Foreign Minister, said at a briefing in Moscow Thursday.

Karasin said that unilateral change of the size of dues or total cessation of paying them to U.N. agencies is unacceptable.

Karasin emphasized that Russia supports UNIDO as the central element of the U.N. system encouraging industrial progress. In particular, he recalled, Russia declared in 1995 that it will contribute $12 million to UNIDO, one and a half times the country's annual dues.

According to Karasin, this support does not imply that Russia is quite happy over UNIDO's performance. He said that the organization has to operate faster and more economically.

A more detailed account is published in Interfax Diplomatic Panorama of December 14.

Duma's Lukin Places Conditions on START-2 Ratification

LD1412232695 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1644 GMT 14 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS diplomatic correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Moscow, 14 Dec — The START-2 treaty should be ratified on condition that the United States continue to adhere to the Antimissile Defense Treaty, Vladimir Lukin, the chairman of the State Duma International Affairs Committee, has said. At the launch of the book "Russia and the West: Commonality or Alienation?" he co-authored, the well-known Russian politician spoke in favor of a realistic policy toward the Western powers.

Citing meetings in various regions of the Russian Federation, the parliamentarian said that Russia's society has been "disappointed" by a number of the latest developments in relations with the West. For example, the remarks on the future of the South Kuril Islands by Thomas Pickering, the U.S. ambassador to the Russian Federation, have given rise to "total incomprehension and condemnation." Similar statements in reality play into the hands of nationalists whose ascent to power, Vladimir Lukin said, will result in Russia "falling out" not only with Japan, but also with China, Turkey, and several other countries.

Vladimir Lukin added that he perceived at least five threats the emergence of which will present the greatest danger to the Russian Federation: Internal chaos, continuing crisis in the economy, self-isolation in the pursuance of a chauvinist policy, hot spots at the border, and "the nuclear issue as a whole." [passage omitted]

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Duma Committee Chairman Assails Pickering on Kurils

LD1412165895 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1552 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 14 (Interfax) - Vladimir Lukin, the chairman of the State Duma Foreign Relations Committee, denounced the statement made by Thomas Pickering, the U.S. ambassador to Russia, in which he called for transfer of the South Kurils to Japan.

Lukin said at a news conference that this statement and its endorsement by the State Department were stupid.

"They may have set up an association for encouragement of Russian chauvinists in the State Department," Lukin said.

Lukin said that such statements amount to an attempt to resolve the problems in the U.S.-Japanese relations at Russia's expense.

Sergey Glazyev, one of the leaders of the Congress of Russian Communities, said that gentlemen whose country's history is a mere 200 years old have no business telling Russia with a history of 1,000 years which lands belong to it and which do not.

"We will make our own decision and in the case of the South Kurils a decision has been made," Glazyev said Thursday at a presentation in Moscow of a book, Russian Kurils: History and Today, a collection of documents on the history of the Russian-Japanese and Soviet-Japanese border.

A more detailed account is published in Interfax Diplomatic Panorama of December 14.

China, Japan Asked To Search for Missing Tu-154

LD1412133395 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1149 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KHABAROVSK, Dec 14 (Interfax-Eurasia) — Viktor Ishayev, governor of the Russian Far Eastern region of Khabarovsk and chairman of the Governmental Commission On Searches for the Disappeared Plane, has lodged requests with the governments of China and Japan through diplomatic channels for any information that might help to locate the vanished TU-154, reports the governor's office.

Although a week has passed since the TU-154 with 97 people on board disappeared on the Yuzhno Sakhalinsk-Khabarovsk route in Russia's Far East, intensive searches for the airliner have so far been unsuccessful.

The searches have involved 14 helicopters, five planes, and five naval ships. Civilian vessels have been withdrawn from the search zone, deputy chief of the Far Eastern Regional Center for Civil Defence and Emergency Situations Sergey Ogloblin told Interfax.

Two camps are to be pitched for land reconnaissance in the presumed crash area, which has been expanded northwards and southwards alike, the source said.

Meanwhile, Lt. Gen. Valeriy Vostrotin, deputy chief of Russia's Ministry for Emergency Situations, arrived in Khabarovsk today to coordinate search operations.

Zhirinovskiy on Lack of Political Freedom in Germany

AU1512121195 Munich DEUTSCHE NATIONAL-ZEITUNG in German 15 Dec 95 p 3

[Article by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia: "What I Intend To Do With Germany"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The rabble-rousing propaganda about me in Germany and Austria is running at full throttle shortly before the Russian parliamentary elections on 17 December. Because no Russian will allow the German media's defamation of me to influence the way he votes, the purpose of this campaign can only be to poison Russo-German relations.

What am I actually being accused of and what do I really think? It is true that I represent Russian interests, believe in Russia's resurrection, and by all means wish to prevent my fatherland from being sacrificed to the "Western system of values."

It is also true that I am striving for permanent, close, and friendly relations between Germany and Russia, mind you, on the basis of mutual respect, non-interference in the domestic affairs of the other side, and complete equality.

Chancellor Kohl recently declared that Russia must be helped along the path to democracy. I wish to let it be known that my ideas about the democratic process are considerably different from those that currently obtain in Germany.

I consider it democratic when the media, especially television, are open to all political forces, including the opposition. But in Germany, even shortly before the elections, patriots have to resort to the courts to obtain just a few minutes of air time to express their views.

In Russia, parties of all political shades can hold meetings in halls or in the open air to their heart's content, even if they do have to announce their meetings weeks or months in advance. In Germany, the so-called autonomists, anarchists, or other terrorists groups

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simply beat up anyone who attends events of which they disapprove, including those of the German People's Union.

In Russia, those who have died for our country are honored in every way and no one would think of desecrating their graves or monuments. The majority of Germans, too, honor their dead. However, this majority is powerless against an all-pervading opinion-forming industry that possesses no democratic legitimacy whatsoever.

Persecution for one's views, of the kind to be found in Germany, is unknown to us in Russia. Here, anyone can freely express his views about episodes of history, which I consider quite necessary in a democracy. Revisionism is not hindered in Russia. If increasing numbers of foreign, and now also Russian, historians conclude from their research that Germany was not solely responsible for the 1941 German-Soviet conflict, no major circle in Russia will condemn this as "politically incorrect" or even threaten prison sentences for expressing such an opinion.

Germans and Russians have faced each other in two murderous wars this century and have had to make greater sacrifices than any other nations. From this I conclude that we must not by any means become obsessed by this relatively short and terrible period in our otherwise friendly centuries-old relations. To my mind, the permanent self-accusations being practiced in Germany are abnormal. Such a national masochism is an obstacle on the road to equality and prevents one from mastering the problems of the present and future.

Although a disgusting form of journalism, which stops at nothing, has accused me of acting irresponsibly toward the Russian people, in fact my Liberal Democrats have proved themselves to be a convincing stabilizing element, even in the State Duma. It cannot be a sin to preserve or restore Russia as a great power, a view that more than a few politicians share.

Where are the fundamental differences in interests between Moscow and Berlin? There is nothing that can separate us or even make us enemies again. Germany and Russia should complement each other in all spheres of life, to their mutual advantage.

The current extraordinary difficulties faced by the largest and perhaps the richest country on earth can also be overcome. But the German economy has every possibility of reviving its development.

As a steadfast friend of the German people, I appeal to all men of good will: Let us learn the only intelligent and correct lesson from history. Let us be friends.

Moscow Protests Chechen Conference in Poland

LD1412151595 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1332 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 14 (Interfax) — The Russian Foreign Ministry Wednesday presented a note to the Polish Embassy in Moscow regarding the conference organized several days ago by the Chechen Information Center, based in the Polish city of Krakow, under the "provocative" title of "International Law and the Chechen Republic." Local authorities in Krakow assisted in its organization, spokesman of the Russian Foreign Ministry Grigoriy Karasin told Interfax Thursday.

"The conference had the obvious intention of representing Chechnya as a subject for international law and international relations," Karasin said.

The conference was accompanied "not by numerous, but loud anti-Russian demonstrations in Krakow and Warsaw," said Karasin.

Russian citizens view this "remembrance ceremony" held on the territory of Hitler's former concentration camp at Auschwitz as blasphemy, because this year they celebrated the 50th anniversary of their victory over fascism, the diplomat said.

"The Russian Foreign Ministry views this activity by the Chechen center and its Polish patrons as an attempt to darken the successfully developing Russian-Polish relations, as an attempt to interfere in Russia's internal affairs," Karasin said.

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Political Issues

Medvedev Reports Yeltsin 'Cheerful,' Has Lost 10 Kg

LD1412164995 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1552 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 14 (INTERFAX) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin will cast his ballot on December 17 at a branch of the 7159th polling station, to be set up in the main building of the Barvikha sanatorium, presidential spokesman Sergey Medvedev told INTERFAX Thursday.

He said that according to usual practice, such provisional polling stations are set up in hospitals. All patients undergoing treatment in Barvikha will vote with Yeltsin.

Speaking about the president's health, Medvedev said that Yeltsin is cheerful and has lost 10 kilograms of weight.

Today he met with aides and worked on documents, which he intends to do Friday as well, said Medvedev.

He also said that the president will address the Russians on television Friday in connection with the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Yeltsin Staff Seen Anxious To Postpone June Elections

MK1512105895 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 15 Nov 95 p 2

[Exclusive article by Andrey Kolesnikov, head of the NOVOYE VREMYA weekly economics desk, for NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA: "President's Successor Is Mr. X. Russian Political Elite Is Interested in Preserving Existing State of Affairs"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Boris Yeltsin is unlikely to be returned for a second term as president if elections take place. Who is going to become the head of state is one question. The other separate problem is whom Yeltsin will "appoint" as his successor if he does not run for the presidency?

The [presidential] election is not the main political problem by far. Or more correctly, the election is a problem subordinated to another, bigger, and equally important problem for the Kremlin, the White House, and both houses of parliament. The question is that virtually all representatives of Russia's political elite, regardless of differences of political views and offices, are interested in preserving today's status quo.

In the final analysis, both the Communists and the Democrats feed from the same trough. For example, Gennadiy Andreyevich Zyuganov stands to lose much more than to gain if the Communists come to power. Today he has his suits made for him in the same tailor shop he had them made five years ago, and he lives in a good brick-walled dacha in the settlement of Snegiri. There is also the nationwide affection he enjoys and which he might lose as soon as he takes the reins of government — in which case he would not be able to shift all the blame onto the democrats.

The presidential bureaucrats are completely uninterested in altering their lifestyle. In the White House, too, there has taken shape a balance of forces and interests that suits almost everyone — the spheres of influence have been divided, and the economy is getting used to what are now humdrum whistle blows coming in from centers of management. While people are grumbling, they have more or less adapted themselves to the circumstances. Elements of some sort of semi-stabilization are in evidence.

Elections may make a jumble of all the pages of this already established "anatomic atlas" of power. And for the umpteenth time, everyone would have to adapt to new conditions. This is extremely hard to do technically, psychologically, and physiologically.

It turns out that no one needs elections. But they feel ashamed to say this straight out, they feel it is undemocratic. So it is necessary to conceive a mechanism for postponing the elections that would prove relatively legitimate, resulting from a consensus of all the power branches and the main political forces.

Much ink has been wasted explaining why Nikolay Ryabov behaved the way he did. While the most varied guesses can be considered, we will proceed from information from one high-ranking executive branch official. The information (not a guess) is plain: Ryabov acted on cue from the top, from the president's staff. The goal: to postpone the elections, to preserve the status quo for another few months so as to determine in clearer terms the strategy and tactics of the presidential elections (which it would not be too bad to postpone either). Understandably, the elections would not make any sense without the participation of Yavlinskiy's bloc, which is capable of "diverting" a greater part of the democratic electorate. Dropping Yavlinskiy from the race would motivate the entire active part of voters against the elections. Public opinion would thus coincide with the wishes of the political establishment. Such an element as the Supreme Court was of course taken into account in this scheme. However, even in case of Yavlinskiy's "coming back" (which indeed happened), public opinion would increasingly swing in favor of postponing the parliamentary elections, strengthening

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and changing their legislative base, and more careful organizational preparations for them.

The somewhat "romanticized" image of the "liberal wing" in the presidential entourage is far removed from reality, to put it mildly. The urge to postpone the elections is too manifest in the behavior of "non-power people" [nesiloviki] in the presidential entcurage. It is patently clear that there are no two views within the "near circle" — otherwise, Georgiy Satarov and Mikhail Krasnov would not have held their positions. It is from the "near circle" that election "passes" came aimed at the former CPSU Central Committee Entrance No. 9, which now houses the Central Electoral Commission.

The president's staff have yet another motive to stall for time: They cannot find for Boris Yeltsin a reserve player for the presidential elections. They have nobody to nominate from amongst themselves: The "near circle" is too self-sufficient, narrow, and nomenklatura-bound to be socially significant. The "court" cannot be a political force in elections, it only good for decisionmaking between elections and immaculate in unwinding "Ariadne's thread" of intrigues. No public politician wants to be a "court" protege — this is not the best of political promotion ads. Attempts made last year to enlist Boris Nemtsov for this role were a complete failure — the Nizhniy Novgorod governor publicly declined the "indecent offer."

There are two men who could become Boris Yeltsin's proteges and successors should he decide against running, having critically assessed his chances.

However, the "near circle" do not want to nominate either of the men: These guys come from other, rather independent teams whose influence upon Yeltsin is markedly less than that of the "court." A the same time, they are a much more formidable force as regards practical economic management and public politics.

The "near circle" are making a serious mistake by inflaming the rivalry with Chernomyrdin's and Luzhkov's groups. Neither the premier nor the mayor want the presidency. The presidency is needed by the "near circle" to keep at least some of their former political positions. A ceremonious passing of the campaign baton from Yeltsin to Chernomyrdin or Luzhkov is not going to guarantee them calm living after the elections. It is for this reason that the selection of a successor is being dragged out and all possible efforts are being made to postpone all possible elections.

There were serious contradictions between Chernomyrdin and Luzhkov. The premier sided with Anatoliy Chubays in the latter's debate with the mayor of Moscow on privatization. Chernomyrdin's economic policy substantially differs from Luzhkov's economic policy. But now both politicians find themselves under the shared roof of "Our Home." They are interested in each other, having opted for a single image strategy. Both are "men of deeds," economic managers. Therein lies their electoral advantages, which work more effectively if both their names are joined under the logo of the same political movement. The apotheosis of the Chernomyrdin and Luzhkov alliance was their appearance together at the "Spartak" (Moscow) versus "Rusenborg" soccer match. Appearing together in public, they sent yet another reminder: We economic managers did not go to see tennis, like "those" from the president's staff, we came to see soccer, a common people's game loved by everyone. This was a very strong and spectacular move.

Both Luzhkov and Chernomyrdin deny that they are going to run for the presidency. They will do that only if they receive a concrete task from Boris Yeltsin.

Women of Russia Unlikely To Field Candidate

LD1412174395 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1332 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 14 (INTERFAX) — Nobody is likely to run for the 1996 presidential elections from Women of Russia, the movement's leader Alevtina Fedulova told a press conference in Moscow Thursday.

"One should not be in a hurry now. The movement must not only choose but also prepare its candidate for the Russian presidency and nominate her for the next elections in 2000."

Speaking about the upcoming December 17 elections to the State Duma, Fedulova said "the movement intends to cooperate with any parties and blocs in the new Russian State Duma whose draft decrees coincide with ours."

"The movement may propose several of its representatives to the posts of Russia's deputy prime minister and deputy finance minister," she said. However, she refused to name them.

Yeltsin Signs Two Parliamentary Bills Into Law

LD1512114595 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1124 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 15 (ITAR-TASS) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has signed a federal law on "Ratification of the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Interstate Aviation Committee on Conditions for Its Staying in the Territory of the Russian Federation".

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The agreement was signed in Moscow on October 20, 1995. The federal law ratifying the agreement was passed by the State Duma on November 24 and approved by the Federation Council on November 28, 1995.

A release from the presidential press service, dispatched to ITAR-TASS today, says Yeltsin has also signed a federal law on "Changes and Additions to the Law of the Russian Federation on Appeal to Court about Acts and Decisions Violating Rights and Liberites of Citizens".

The law was passed by the State Duma on November 15, 1995.

Chernomyrdin: Priority is To Lower Inflation, Prices

LD1412150895 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1332 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 14 (INTERFAX) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin says his government's main priority in 1996 is to try to bring down inflation and prices.

An annual 25 percent-30 percent inflation rate is feasible and the new budget will help resolve the task, he said in an interview with INTERFAX on Thursday.

The prime minister spoke of government plans to set conditions for industrial stabilization and growth after straightening out the plants' financial standing. To this end, he said, the enterprises will be allowed to tie the cost of their basic assets to inflation from next year.

Chernomyrdin said he hoped the new measure would be introduced early next year. He said the government was planning to draw up and implement a new industrial policy in 1996.

One other government priority is to restore private savings eaten up by price liberalization. The prime minister said the government was trying to raise funds to be able to start compensating losses by war veterans and the elderly starting from the age of 65 in the next two months.

Chernomyrdin said the cabinet intended to achieve a serious breakthrough in solving the problem of housing shortage by implementing a federal program, Your Home. This provides for easy-term credits to citizens deciding to build their houses on their own.

Chernomyrdin Answers Questions on Economy

LD1512120195 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1900 GMT 14 Dec 95

[News conference by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin with unidentified correspondents in Moscow on 13 December — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] Viktor Stepanovich, what political event or a government decision over the past three years turned out, in your view, to have been the most successful, and are there any events or decisions you could qualify as clearly a failure?

[Chernomyrdin] I am not that accustomed to talking about successes, not that there are many of them, anyway, I have to admit. The main thing I can say is that we have turned the country back from the abyss. We have not allowed the country to fall into a really serious crisis. Despite all the circumstances, we have managed to attain the economic parameters we ourselves defined beforehand. I think this is our main achievement, our main success, the fact that economy is alive today, that it is working, and that at the end of 1995 we can already speak of some results that will make it possible for us, even this year, to resolve certain difficult problems I have just been talking about.

This, then, is what I regard as the main issue. As for our difficulties and problems and our more or less vexing failures, as it were, it would be better not to mention them. You are, after all, just as aware of them as I am myself.

[Correspondent] Viktor Stepanovich, over the past month or two, you and members of the cabinet have been generous with promises to assist cheated investors, miners, servicemen. Which promise are you going to keep?

[Chernomyrdin] Thank you for your question. All the promises that have been given will all be kept, and I mean all. We have promised to rectify matters with regard to the payment of pensions, no matter how difficult it might be, and we are paying them. We have promised that the federal bodies and the federal budget will settle things with the budget-financed organizations in the regions, and we have kept, are keeping, and will keep this promise. We have promised to have investors sorted out, whenever the opportunity for this does occur, and I have just said that the economy is beginning to work and produce positive results. Thus an opportunity has appeared, and we are beginning to make use of it to resolve the problem of investors. Incidentally, this is not some kind of a gimmick to make life more comfortable for some people because the elections are just round

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the corner — nothing of the kind. This represents the resolution of social problems of our people, and we will be doing just that and more, too.

Take the promises given to the miners, as you said earlier. Hold out during the current year, so that everything that the budget provided for, and I mean the budget, about the parameters which, upon which I, from which we proceed...[pauses] so, the miners [sentence as heard]. I can now say, my colleagues may correct me, that we provide more than the budget originally provided for.

However, we could not do more, we could not. Nor did we promise anything more, and it is this, perhaps, that distinguishes us from others. Incidentally, this troubles us more than anything, and by us I mean the government, first and foremost.

[Correspondent] Viktor Stepanovich, as far as the political aspects of your introductory remarks, when you outlined the situation in the country, your electoral and other political opponents outline this situation somewhat differently and take a very dim view indeed. Some voices have even been heard that under some kind of plausible pretext — say the possibility of union with Belarusia, or a threat to national security, as, for instance, exemplified by the situation in Chechnya — the presidential elections may be cancelled. Some have gone so far as to suggest that authoritarian state rule might be introduced. What is your attitude, personally, to such talk? Thank you.

[Chernomyrdin] In the first place, my attitude to such talk is negative, that is in the first place. Second, Russia has a nationwide constitution. We are duty bound to act, and we do now act in the spirit of the Constitution we have adopted.

I do not think the current political situation in the country makes it possible to make such decisions as you have just mentioned. Yes, some people would like it. Some people constantly peddled this subject, constantly so. With the elections upon us, some people constantly fanned up this subject, alleging that the elections would not take place and that the president and government will do all they can to make sure that the elections do not take place.

The elections will, indeed, take place. Let no one now have any doubts on this score.

I think the presidential elections will take place, too. This is because we have a Constitution, and the president is the guarantor of the Constitution.

No authoritarian regime will take power in Russia, nor will there be any unions, mergers, or split-ups, either. Under no circumstances, and notwithstanding Russia's difficulties, whatever these might yet be, will we allow ourselves to deviate from the Constitution we have adopted.

[Correspondent] Returning to the decree concerning the cheated investors, there exist two points of view. On the one hand, it can be seen as encouraging those who played according to casino rules. One the other hand, it can be seen as assistance to the poor, unfortunate investors, cheated by swindlers. Whatever the case, how will their losses be compensated? What is your view?

[Chernomyrdin] I do not think that suddenly more than 20 million people have emerged in Russia with a yearning for a casino-type game. We do have our dodgers who certainly know what they are doing. They set up all these structures, pyramid structures, as they are now called and, of course, they attracted many people who have nothing to do with such casino-type games or the concepts in your question.

I think many of those 20 million people who got involved in this game, although the figure of about 30 million is now being mentioned, are, first and foremost, pensioners. Many of these people have little to live on, to put it bluntly. Of course life is not easy, the temptation is great. What can you say? Even those in authority, quite high up, even those people had losses. All this must be sorted out.

I think and repeat yet again, that this is first and foremost a social resolution and social issue that people found themselves in such a situation. Moreover, I can say I feel a bit guilty myself. I feel guilty for the government, too, for the fact that we have not managed to persuade and convince people not to do it. Well, we will now have to have accounts settled here. I must just say briefly what we proceed from.

Taking account of the fact that the economy, that this year has not been easy for us, Russia, or the government, that things have been harsh, even too harsh, but we have kept to the budget of this year, the year 1995, and we have brought the main parameters, if you talk about lowering of prices and of the level of inflation and all that, we have brought about a situation in which the industry has begun, or the national economy has, over more than the last six months, not gone down below 100 percent.

It is this that made it possible for us to tackle certain issues, first and foremost social issues and first and foremost the most difficult issues. Here, then, is the source of all that. No special stockpiles or anything extra have been used for these purposes. Everything

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comes from what we have at our disposal, what we make, produce, and market ourselves.

[Correspondent] Viktor Stepanovich, what has been your main principle over the past three years, the main principle for you, the government, in economic policy? Do you think that at the current stage of the country's development the state ought to retain for itself effective levers of economic regulation? In your view, in what forms should this regulating role of the state be reflected? Thank you.

[Chernomyrdin] Thank you. First and foremost, I must say, yet again, that the main thing for us, and I am talking about the government, I have to say that the government has been working and is working together with the president. All the policies and their main thrust have constantly been and are are constantly coordinated with the president, and that is why what we have in Russia today is the common result of ours, but the main thing for us was to keep the country on a steady course, to keep it steady, so that the main principle inherent in our policies, that is to say the market relations, market conditions, could be implemented, as it had to be.

A great deal of work was done with our legislators. The main laws had to be adopted, laws underpinning the country's existence, and I have here in mind first and foremost the economic laws. We had to do everything, and we were doing just that, in order that the country should start to live according to these laws that were adopted, these norms and legal regulations, so that, at long last, the structural perestroyka could get under way in the national economy and in industry, so that the conversion program could yield effects. Things are difficult, and currently we have little by way of resources for this, but the program did get off the ground. This, then, was just one of our tasks.

However, in principle, the main and foremost task, as I said in my introductory remarks, is that everything is returning to normal.

As for state influence or the state's attitude to what is currently taking place in the national economy, I am convinced and have said it repeatedly and am saying it now, that yes, the state will exert its influence and the state will manage things in those sectors and areas we regard as falling within the state's remit and there is plenty to manage here. It is a huge sector, a huge area, and it will be a long way yet into the future. The future will show, but I think that management by the state will forever be a feature in Russia.

[Correspondent] Viktor Stepanovich, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF] and the Congress of Russian Communities [KRO] currently try to enter parliament, mainly through their populist slogans. As head of the government and someone involved in practice, how do you assess the economic provisions of their programs, and where, if anywhere, does the danger lie in having their programs implemented, in your view? Thank you.

[Chernomyrdin] As for the CPRF and the KRO, although I know the latter less, it is a somewhat mysterious organization for me, in principle, as may indeed be the case for many people, but I must, in principle, say that these slogans, especially the election slogans, the promises currently given by the leaders of the Communist Party and the Congress of Russian Communities, are for me, for a normal person, in my view, well just take a look at the price of these slogans and promises.

Just imagine that all this can be implemented. I, personally, cannot today wish this for Russia, not that it is possible to do, anyway. It would entail a price explosion, galloping inflation, a sharp and general regression to the olden days. Will the economy hold out? Will our people hold out? Is it necessary for Russia today? I think that it is impossible. I think it will not happen.

Korzhakov Discusses Yeltsin, Elections, Grachev

LD1412223795 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1945 GMT 14 Dec 95

[Interview with Aleksandr Korzhakov, head of Russian President Boris Yeltsin's security service, by Vladimir Pozner; place and date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Pozner] Aleksandr Vasilyevich, when I knew I would have the opportunity to interview you, I did what I had done many times — I asked various people: What would you ask him, if you had a chance? So I now have a list of questions — I call them questions from men in the street. This shows that people are curious about you. On the one hand, you are a mysterious figure to some extent — this has something to do with your job. On the other hand, you are a well-known figure. Therefore, the questions reflect both sides of your activity. How old are you?

[Korzhakov] I am 46 in a month and a half.

[Pozner] Are you married?

[Korzhakov] Yes.

[Pozner] Is it your first marriage?

[Korzhakov] Yes.

[Pozner] Do you have children?

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[Korzhakov] Yes. Galya is the eldest daughter, and Natasha is the youngest. She is now studying at a medical college.

[Pozner] The youngest one is. And the eldest?

[Korzhakov] The eldest is a married woman.

[Pozner] Incidentally, who is her husband?

[Korzhakov] Her husband is neither a diplomat, nor a trade representative. He is just an ordinary — but a very good one — dentist.

[Pozner] And what does your wife do?

[Korzhakov] She has been working at a church recently, during the most difficult years — 1990-91.

[Pozner] So, she is a believer, isn't she?

[Korzhakov] She is a believer.

[Pozner] What about you?

[Korzhakov] Me? I have been a communist all the time, you see. You see, I believe in God but don't know how to pray.

[Pozner] Where were you born?

[Korzhakov] I was born in Moscow, about 100 meters from the White House. There was a barracks there. We had an eight-square-meter room virtually in the basement. That's where I was born.

[Pozner] Where did you study?

[Korzhakov] I studied at school. I worked at a factory for one year and then I joined the army by choice. Well, I was invited to serve at the Kremlin. I was a player for the Dinamo team [the soccer team of the Interior Ministry], so one could have looked for something more quiet, but I was offered to serve at the Kremlin. It wasn't a usual practice to invite Moscow residents to serve at the Kremlin. But that was the first year when they decided to invite Moscow residents — sportsmen.

[Pozner] What year was it?

[Korzhakov] 1968. So I ended up in the Kremlin. And then I just stayed there.

[Pozner] So then they sort of singled you out, didn't they?

[Korzhakov] Yes. I served there two years and stayed to work as a security guard. Then I graduated from the jurisprudence institute by mail.

[Pozner] Under what circumstances did you meet Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin first time?

[Korzhakov] In 1985 I was offered — [pauses] When he wasn't yet the first secretary of the Moscow city committee [of the CPSU] — he was the secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU for construction, but a prospective first secretary of the city committee — I think the decision had already been made — he was elected a candidate Politburo member — and candidate Politburo members are entitled to have personal security guards. So I was offered work as his security guard. He summoned me for an interview. That was when I met him.

[Pozner] So, he could have refused you?

[Korzhakov] Yes, he could have refused. He could have disliked me, and he could have turned me down. So, the first impression was not that bad, after all, and he didn't turn me down. And until now...

[Pozner, interrupting] If I am right, it was 1986 when he [Yeltsin] lost all his posts.

[Korzhakov] In 1988 when he was removed from candidates to the Politburo members, at the same time his body guards were removed.

[Pozner] And you?

[Korzhakov] And I was removed, I was a military person.

[Pozner] So you said goodbye to each other at the time?

[Korzhakov] Yes, we said goodbye to our work together.

[Pozner] But did you continue to see each other?

[Korzhakov] Yes, we would see each other from time to time.

[Pozner] In other words, the personal relations between you two developed during the period when you were working for him, in just over two years, is that right?

[Korzhakov] You see, I had worked in the system for a long time and met many people: members of the Politburo, and candidates to the members of the Politburo, and general secretaries. I had seen enough of them. And when I met Boris Nikolayevich, when I saw him in real work, I realized that a real leader should be like him.

[Pozner] Apart from your working relations, evidently the personal relations between you were developing, too?

[Korzhakov] Yes, he was a brilliant volleyball player. And I played quite well. While on holiday, we used to play in one team and beat local champions, so to speak. In 1989 as soon as I was removed, allegedly I was laid off — a 39-year-old strong man was made redundant...

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[Pozner, interrupting] Obviously, because...

[Korzhakov, interrupting] Only for this, I was simply told by our deputy head...

[Pozner, interrupting] He told you directly?

[Korzhakov] Yes, I was told directly. At first they warned me not to see him and that time...

[Pozner, interrupting] So they simply fired you?

[Korzhakov] Yes, they simply fired me. All of us, his [Yeltsin's] closest friends, his closest team, decided that something must be done, someone must be with him all the time. I told them that I was happy to do this, no problem, although I had no arms, nothing. I only carried a penknife and a hunting signal pistol at the time.

[Pozner] The hunting pistol is such a small thing.

[Korzhakov] Like a fountain pen. And the whole of the KGB was against us. But Boris Nikolayevich and I understood each other very well. We even agreed what we would do in a critical situation, we agreed we would stand back to back and beat off the attackers. Thank God, he was a brave man and physically strong who could deliver a good blow.

[Pozner] Do you think there was a real danger at the time of some physical violence?

[Korzhakov] There was a very real danger, it could not be easier in those days. But they underestimated him. They did not think that Yeltsin would rise that high and that he would outwit them. They underestimated him.

[Pozner] Let's recall the opinions about Yeltsin and his development since he came to public attention. When he was running for president of Russia, the party and state apparatus did everything they could to ruin him. And he won with an overwhelming majority and his popularity rating was extremely high. I am talking about June 1991 here. When during the putsch [August 1991] it was as if he was the embodiment of free Russia — when he was standing on a tank etc., his popularity rating was going through the stratosphere, so to speak. There was hardly anyone who could beat his popularity at the time. Historically speaking, not so much time has passed since, less than four years. What worries me is that the image of Boris Nikolayevich in the eyes of many people — it is not the result of a scientific poll of any kind, it just emerged from my conversations with people — I can feel that the attitude has changed.

[Korzhakov] At the time, in 1991, everyone was euphoric: democracy had won and everything would be fine from now on. Everyone wanted to obtain everything too quickly, didn't they?

[Pozner] Certainly, they did.

[Korzhakov] But it turned out that it was not that easy to break down such a bulky and cumbersome structure, such resistance. Do you remember the resistance Khasbulatov's Supreme Soviet was showing him all the time? There was constant struggle. If everyone had been working in unison with the president, perhaps we would have moved forward faster.

[Pozner] One of the reasons for your decision to give this interview is the desire to call on people to go to the elections.

[Korzhakov] Yes.

[Pozner] Why does it worry you?

[Korzhakov] You know, those who are going to vote for the communists will come without fail. But those who do not know who to vote for — there are 42 parties there — will not come at all. And as a result, it will look as if the communists have won, when in reality the percentage of support they have is not great.

[Pozner] Why does it worry you that the communists will win? Let them win, what is wrong with it?

[Korzhakov] We are weary of fighting: we were fighting the Supreme Soviet, we are fighting this Duma. Perhaps the new Duma will work in unison with the legislature; the legislative and executive branches should follow one path. It does worry me because I can see all this from the inside.

[Pozner] Are you going to vote for Rybkin?

[Korzhakov] I will vote for Rybkin's Bloc.

[Pozner] Will all your family vote for Rybkin's Bloc?

[Korzhakov] No, the family will vote for Chernomyrdin's bloc, for Russia Is Our Home. My wife prefers Viktor Stepanovich.

[Pozner] I see.

[Korzhakov] As for Ivan Petrovich [Rybkin], she has never met him. I, on the contrary, in the last two years... [pauses] Strange coincidences, metamorphoses, happen in life. I first met Rybkin in the White House on 4 October 1993. And he turned out to be a thinking person and not a possessed one, like some people. Yes, he is from the communists. Yes, he is from the agrarians. But this man... [pauses] We all come from the communists, some of us sooner, others later, changed their mind and looked at what was going on from the outside. But what I like about him, he is perhaps the most Russian of all Russians. Once we had a very warm conversation — it turned out that he knows all his... [pauses] For example, do you know your grandfather, what did he do?

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[Pozner] Yes, I do.

[Korzhakov] And great-grandfather?

[Pozner] No, I don't.

[Korzhakov] He knows not only his grandfather and great-grandfathers, he knows all his ancestors.

[Pozner] You yourself know that various people say various things about you, inter alia rather prominent and well-known people. In particular, Grachev has mentioned you more than once. What do you think of the defense minister? In general, the attitude towards him is far from being unequivocal.

[Korzhakov] You know, I don't want to say much. I will simply outline some of his positive features. Pavel Sergeyevich loves his wife very much. Pavel Sergeyevich loves his children very much. Pavel Sergeyevich loves his friends very much. As a military commander, Pavel Sergeyevich is very good at making reports. But he is most talented in organizing military parades.

[Pozner] All right then. They also somehow, let us say, connect you, I do not quite understand why, about [Iosif] Kobzon [a popular singer]. There somehow is friction or something like that between you. What can you tell me about this?

[Korzhakov] Kobzon sings well so let him sing — on the stage and not at the podium.

[Pozner] Probably, one of the most talked about politicians in our country at present, who is the subject of conversations even more frequently than you are, is Yuriy Mikhaylovich Luzhkov. There also is a lot of talk that there are problems between you.

[Korzhakov] My attitude towards Luzhkov is complex. If he, however, runs in the mayoral election, I shall vote in his favor. If he, on the other hand, were to run in the presidential election in the year 2000, I shall vote against him.

[Pozner] Do you think Boris Nikolayevich will run for president in June 1996?

[Korzhakov] Boris Nikolayevich will announce this in February. This is the most difficult problem: when we are criticizing the president, we forget about one thing — what will happen if he refuses to run?

[Pozner] What will happen?

[Korzhakov] I think something bad will happen.

[Pozner] Do you ever go on holiday or have a rest?

[Korzhakov] No, I have not been on holiday for seven years now.

[Pozner] How does your wife feel about it?

[Korzhakov, laughing] What kind of question is that?

[Pozner] If I do not go on holiday, my wife does not take kindly to it.

[Korzhakov, laughing] Whereas you are a normal human being, my popularity is high.

Communist Deputies Call For Poll on 'Renewed Union'

MM1512122795 Moscow PRAVDA ROSSII in Russian 14 Dec 95 p 1

[Unsigned, undated "Appeal to the Peoples and Parliaments of States Belonging to the Former Soviet Union"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The communist deputies of legislative bodies of countries formed in the territory of the Soviet Union,

understanding the historical inevitability and enormous significance of the processes of integration between the republics which made up the USSR,

expressing the steadfast will of the peoples to preserve and strengthen ties between these republics,

and mindful that a solution to the general systemic crisis can only be found through cooperation and unification,

appeal to the peoples and parliaments of states belonging to the former Soviet Union to begin vigorous action to really bring our states closer together in all spheres of social life: economic, cultural, diplomatic, military, and political.

We, communist deputies, appeal to the parliaments and heads of countries in the CIS with the proposal to carry out nationwide opinion polls in 1996 to establish people's attitude to the idea of integration within a renewed Union. On the basis of the results of these polls, we feel it necessary to begin forming a political, economic, and military union involving all who wish to join.

Air Traffic Controllers Not To Heed Call For Strike

MM1412155495 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 15 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Viktor Belikov: "Air Traffic Controllers Not Striking for the Moment"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The nationwide strike of air traffic controllers planned for 15 December will not take place. IZVESTIYA correspondent Viktor Belikov was told by A. Travnikov, leader of the Association of Enterprises Providing Air Navigation Services, that a poll of air traffic control services had shown that their collectives do not support the "protest action" dreamed

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up by the leadership of the Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Trade Unions.

Strike Lacks Support in Some Regions

LD1512095995 Moscow INFORMATSIONNOYE AGENTSTVO EKHO MOSKVY in Russian 0925 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Air controllers in Novokuznetsk, Tolmachev (Novosibirsk), Ulan Ude, Chita, Murmansk, Nagnitogorsk, Anapa, Sochi, Tarke-Sale, and the Moscow automated air traffic control center started an open-ended strike at 1000 hours [0700 GMT] today, Vladimir Konusenko, president of the Federation of Air Traffic Controllers Trade Unions, told Ekho Moskvy radio station.

Air traffic controllers in Magadan, Omsk, St. Petersburg, Khabarovsk, and Moscow's Bykovo airport refused to join the protest action.

Search for Missing Tu-154 Plane Continues

LD1512083795 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0825 GMT 15 Dec 95

[By Anatoliy Vostokov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KHABAROVSK, December 15 (ITAR-TASS) — According to the information of the Far Eastern regional centre of the Ministry for Emergency Situations, by 08.00, Moscow time, the search for the missing TU-154 plane brought no results. Some 20 planes and helicopters are on a search mission. Their number cannot be increased any further because it will be dangerous for the safety of the aircraft.

A spokesman for the rescue operation centre said that a territory of 6,240 square kilometres of the ground and 1,380 square kilometres of the sea was being surveyed. Air reconnaissance had been done on 90 per cent of the territory, and many areas were surveyed twice or even three times. Now new zones began to be surveyed, especially difficult-of-access areas of the Sihote-Alin mountain range.

Landing parties were sent to a number of zones, which were selected on the basis of air photography results. There some areas in the mountains, where landing parties cannot be sent. This makes it impossible to do the searching by large groups, which would be more effective.

Air photography has not yet been completed on the whole area, where the plane might crash. It will be continued, until the whole of the programme is fulfilled, said representatives of the government commission for organizing the rescue operation. The rescue operation centre is situated in Khabarovsk. If the plane of its wreckage are found, the centre will be promptly moved to the scene of the accident.

Reliable sources confirmed that there was unauthorized cargo on board the TU-154 line, which disappeared without trace on December 6. The cargo consisted of five tonnes of red caviar (most probably, in barrels) and 600 kg of sea food. The information was obtained as a result of an investigation, conducted in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, which was the plane's point of departure.

Heads of the rescue operation are rejecting the idea that the air crash might be the result of the excessive weight of the cargo. The flight weight of the airliner was only 81 tonnes, while the maximum figure is 98 tonnes.

Private Farmers Granted R962 Million for Equipment

MM1412140395 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 14 Dec 95 p 2

[Unattributed report under the "Monitoring Government Decisions" rubric: "Appropriations to Private Farmers Will Help Them To Obtain Equipment"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Nine hundred and sixty-two million rubles [R] have been allocated from the federal budget to the "Russian Private Farmer" Fund for the Support and Development of Peasant (Private) Farms. The government has granted these resources for the acquisition of agricultural equipment, which is to be awarded to the winners of the competition held between participants in the Fourth "Russian Private Farmer" World Fair. Money not used for these purposes is liable to be returned to the federal budget.

Space Issues

Parameters of 'Cosmos' Satellites Detailed

LD1412220495 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1417 GMT 14 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Anna Bakina and Viktor Gritsenko]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 14 Dec (ITAR-TASS) — The Russian Federation Military Space Forces today launched the Glonass space navigation system satellites Cosmos 2323, 2324, and 2325, ITAR-TASS has learned from the Military Space Forces press center. Launched by the carrier rocket Proton-K from Baykonur space center, the satellites have been placed into orbit with parameters close to those anticipated, as follows: period of revolution — 11 hours 15 minutes; apogee — 19,145.8 km; perigee — 19,101.1 km; and orbital inclination — 64 degrees 48 minutes.

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The full complement of 24 satellites is now in operation within the system, with the Glonass orbital group controlled by the main space apparatuses test and control center of the Military Space Forces in Krasnoznamensk of Moscow Region. The satellites supply information to the Military Space Forces scientific and informational coordination center.

Regional Affairs

Reportage, Commentary on Chechen Elections

Leader Maskhadov Denounces Elections

MK1412135495 Moscow MOSKOVSKIYE NOVOSTI in Russian
No. 85, 10-17 Dec 95 (Signed to press 12 Dec 95) p 4

[Interview with Chechen leader Aslan Maskhadov by "D.B.": "Aslan Maskhadov: 'We Are Fighters, Not Murderers'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Aslan Maskhadov, chief of the main staff of Chechen armed units, was interviewed by a MOSKOVSKIYE NOVOSTI correspondent.

[Correspondent] If voting takes place, will Doku Zavgayev win?

[Maskhadov] All elections are out of the question. All of the parts in this play have been assigned by the Kremlin in advance. Zavgayev acts exactly like Shevardnadze — the same scenario, the same gestures, facial expressions, vain attempts. He will be elected "unanimously," of course.

[Correspondent] Did Zavgayev meet with field commanders of the resistance with your approval?

[Maskhadov] I personally do not know these people. They are not commanders, they are riffraff.

[Correspondent] Are you going to meet with him?

[Maskhadov] He asked to meet. I refused to — I have nothing to tell him.

[Correspondent] There are rumors about your alliance with Ruslan Khasbulatov.

[Maskhadov] I told him, "If you run for head of the republic, you are a traitor. You can be written off then, you no longer exist as far as I am concerned. Don't be naive and don't think these elections are going to do the people any good." I also told him that if he makes an official statement calling the election a bluff, he would then save face in front of us. I think I have convinced him.

[Correspondent] Is the resumption of war possible?

[Maskhadov] Did it stop? Do you think what is going on is not war? The only thing left of the special observer commission [SOC] is a prisoner exchange group, and they are absolutely inactive. All SOC decisions were immediately discredited. The blast outside the government building is part and parcel of that. There they have guard posts on every corner, soldiers all over the place, it is impossible to bring in explosives. Those who died were civilians; the soldiers were unharmed. Zavgayev claims we did that. A pack of lies. Never, do you hear, never will I sink to terrorism. We are fighters, not murderers. This was done deliberately shortly before your elections. I don't give a damn about them.

[Correspondent] Well, the SOC will hardly be revived then?

[Maskhadov] Who can we talk with if they tell us one thing and do another? I naively thought that the accords would be honored. How can I persuade my people that the war is over and it is necessary to disarm if we are being bombed, if we are being murdered? The Russians tell me: Surrender 60,000 weapons. Even if I had that many, I would never surrender them.

[Correspondent] War is inevitable then?

[Maskhadov] I repeat: It has never ended.

[Correspondent] Who can "pacify" Chechnya?

[Maskhadov] The Chechens alone. Religious authorities, elders, if they are not traitors to the people. There are many such around, unfortunately. You speak of Zavgayev's program. He cannot have any program, because what is he anyway? A big fat zero.

[Correspondent] What would you like to tell General Romanov?

[Maskhadov] Get well soon and better not to make war.

Polling Station Locations Kept Secret

BR1412161895 Madrid EFE in Spanish
1944 GMT 13 Dec 95

[Report by Carmen Romero: "Russia-Chechnya: Organizational Chaos Confirms Fears of Election Rigging"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy (Russia), 13 Dec (EFE) — The prevailing chaos apparent in the organization of the elections to Chechnya's "leadership," together with the pro-Russian authorities' plans to legitimize the elections although as many as 75 percent of voters are abstaining, confirm fears that the elections are being rigged.

When Chechnya's Electoral Committee (CEC) Chairman Abdul-Kerim Arsakhanov was asked in Groznyy

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about the location of the 390 polling stations (out of an overall figure of 420 polling stations which this body claims to be setting up "throughout" the separatist republic's territory) which, according to him, are "all ready" waiting for voters, he gave only ambiguous and vague replies.

"I cannot tell you where they are located, because the sites are secret. Besides, it would be impossible for me to provide accurate information, given that the polling stations are moved from one place to another depending on circumstances. That is to say, many polling stations will move away from the hot spots where there are conflicts," Arsakhanov said today during an interview with EFE.

According to the "right hand" of Doka Zavgayev (the prime minister imposed on Chechnya by the Kremlin, which it aims to legitimize through the upcoming elections on 17 December), "people will be informed of the address of the appropriate polling stations in due course. In addition, there will also be some 'mobile' polling stations."

With regard to growing rumors in Groznyy — the capital of this separatist republic in northern Caucasus — to the effect that these "mobile" polling stations consist of "traveling polling boxes" installed on armored tanks, the head of the CEC limited himself to replying with a smile: "You will see for yourselves. Do not be in such a hurry."

This peculiar election method, if used, would blatantly contravene the electoral law passed on 18 November last by Chechnya's Supreme Soviet (the Soviet-period parliament which was dissolved by rebel leader Dhzokhar Dudayev, and has now been reinstated by former President Zavgayev), apart from the amendments introduced in the law yesterday (Tuesday).

Article 48 (not amended) of this law regulating elections to Chechnya's premiership — a post invented by Moscow in an attempt to legitimize its puppet authorities — establishes that all polling stations must be equipped with "booths to guarantee the secrecy of voting."

Furthermore, Article 23 of the law establishes that "the locations and territorial boundaries of constituencies, as well as the telephone numbers of polling stations, must be published in the local press not later than 15 days before the elections are held."

On the eve of the elections, however, not one of the potential voters interviewed by EFE in Groznyy knew the address of his or her polling station.

At the polling stations, people will presumably be able to vote for one of three candidates for Chechnya's "leadership" or for one of the six men (originally there were eight, but two withdrew because of the lack of democratic guarantees) who are running for the Duma (lower house of Russia's Parliament).

"I must acknowledge that the situation in Chechnya is not like in other parts of Russia. This is why we have been forced to take exceptional measures, such as intensifying security arrangements to enable our citizens to vote, or validating the elections with only a 25 percent turnout," Arsakhanov argued in an attempt to justify these irregularities which he described as "only special measures."

Update on Voter Turnout

LD1412184695 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1700 GMT 14 Dec 95

[Report over video by correspondent A. Vitels from Chechnya — from the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer] Fighting in Gudermes began three hours before polling stations were due to open. In keeping with a ruling by the Chechen Republic Supreme Court, elections of a head of state and Chechnya's deputies in the State Duma began today earlier than elsewhere. Everything was ready in Gudermes. The essential papers were delivered by air because the of the numerous pro-Dudayev checkpoints on the road from Groznyy to Gudermes via Argun.

[Vitels] Chairman Arsakhanov of the republic's electoral commission said the first day's results have confounded the skeptics. The highest turnouts have been in Groznyy and also in Ursus-Martanskiy district, where 45 percent of all registered electors voted, according to the commission. In Alkhan-Yurtskiy district 30 percent of voters turned out and in Alkhan-Kolskiy district nearly half have cast their ballots.

However, voting did not get underway in Vedenskiy and Chiburloyevskiy districts.

Election campaign reports are incomplete, because communications were down today with many parts of the republic. Polling stations were open from 0700 to 1500 today. There were attempts to prevent people from voting in several places, according to the republic's interior ministry, but the law enforcement agencies acted quickly to restore order.

In Groznyy, people preferred to vote in the city center, where it was much safer than the outskirts. Any citizen of Chechnya, irrespective of place of residence, can receive a voting paper in any polling station on presentation of any document bearing a photograph.

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Polling stations open again at 0700 tomorrow. The elections are scheduled to end, as everywhere else in Russia, on the evening of Sunday 17 December. [video shows people voting, armed soldiers guarding polling station]

[Announcer] Rebels hurled grenades last night into a polling station in a school in Leninskiy district of Groznyy. There was also an attempt to seize a polling station in Achkhoy-Martan, which federal forces beat off.

Groznyy Vote Deemed 'Valid'

LD1512080195 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0742 GMT 15 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Sharip Asuyev and Sergey Trofimov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 15 Dec — The elections of the head of the republic and of the State Duma deputies in Groznyy can be deemed to have been held validly. ITAR-TASS was told today by Vladimir Zorin, the first deputy head of the territorial administration of the federal bodies of executive power in Chechnya, that, according to the data of the republican electoral committtee, on the first day of the early elections 27 percent of the registered voters had cast their votes on the first day of the early elections in the Chechen capital.

Elections in the Chechen republic are deemed to have been held validly if 25 percent of the electorate have taken part in it.

Second Day of Elections

LD1512110095 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1019 GMT 15 Dec 95

[By Sharip Asuyev, Sergey Trofimov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, December 15 (Itar-Tass) — Polling stations opened again at seven a.m. in Chechnya on Friday, the second day of ahead-of-schedule elections of head of the Chechen Republic and deputies to the Russian State Duma.

Regarding the first day of the voting, Abdulkerim Arsakhanov, the Chairman of the Republican Electoral Commission, said that voters did not ignore the polls, despite the opposition attempts to prevent the voting. Voters turnout is the highest in Groznyy and in the Urus-Martan district. According to preliminary information almost 45 per cent of the registered voters have already cast their ballots in the Urus-Martan district.

The situation is not the same everywhere, Arsakhanov said. There is no information yet whether the elections started in Vedeno, in the Cheberloyev district. There is complex situation in the Naurskiy district. Opponents to elections blocked the polling stations in the populated localities of Komsomolskaya, Kalinovskaya, Alpatovo, Sovetskaya Rossiya state farms. Two ballot-boxes were burned. The polling station situated in school number 56 was exploded in Groznyy. Because of combat operations started by gunmen in Gudermes, the second most populous city in Chechnya, elections there have not yet begun.

Chechnya Fighting Breaks Out; Basayev Rejects Cease-Fire

MM1412135895 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 14 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Igor Rotar: "Elections in Chechnya Will Go Ahead. But What About After the Elections — War?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy — Election preparations in Groznyy look unusual: All approach routes into the capital have been blocked off by Internal Troops and Russian Army posts. Only those who have a local residence permit are being allowed into the capital.

Southern foothill areas controlled by Dudayev's gunmen have been practically cut off from the outside world. Before the very eyes of IZVESTIYA's correspondent an ambulance which was trying to get from "Dudayev's" territory to the zone controlled by Russian troops was fired at. A bullet shattered the windshield. The driver was slightly wounded. A few hours after this incident Russian servicemen fired at a Red Cross vehicle traveling from Groznyy toward the gunmen's "capital" — the village of Vedeno. Talks between Red Cross representatives and Russian servicemen were unsuccessful. The international organization's members were forced to return home.

It should be recognized that the Russian troops' actions are not devoid of internal logic. On the other side of the front they are making no attempt to hide the fact that they will do everything to disrupt the scheduled elections. "From today [the conversation took place 11 December — I. R.] I am tearing up the cease-fire agreement," Shamil Basayev told IZVESTIYA. "Exactly a year has passed since the day Russian troops were brought in — the war against the peaceful population is continuing. But now a blockade of mountain areas has been added. The council of commanders has decided not to organize acts of sabotage on Russian territory before the elections. They hope that the new Russian leadership will withdraw its troops from Chechnya. I personally do not believe this. Incidentally, I recently purchased some 'Stingers.' So now Russian aviation will not be able to bomb us from the air with impunity."

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"How will the elections be held in Groznyy?" I asked Basayev.

"I would not advise you to be there at that time. We have divided the city into sectors. Only five groups operate under my personal command in Groznyy. Even if do not do anything I cannot vouch for the other commanders," was the reply.

But despite the resoluteness of the supporters of Chechen independence it is obvious that the elections will still go ahead.

A considerable number of Chechens are tired of the current chaos and believe that even in the current conditions the elections give at least some hope that legally elected authorities will be able to bring a peaceful life back to the republic.

"Of course, having elections under the occupying authorities' supervision is ridiculous, but on the other hand it is still better than simply twiddling one's thumbs and watching Chechnya perish," very many of the Chechen people I have spoken to argue.

The attitude toward the elections in Chechnya is reminiscent of a similar procedure in Algeria. "A voting paper is better than a bomb even if the election results are slightly rigged," the French newspaper LIBERATION commented on the situation regarding the recent elections in Algeria. From this viewpoint many Chechens are prepared to agree.

The proportion of fervent Dudayev supporters prepared to pay any price for victory clearly exceeds one-third of the Chechen population. A vast proportion of these people is concentrated in the southern mountainous part of the republic, and most of the Chechen president's supporters come from this very region. It is simply physically impossible to hold elections there.

But in Groznyy and the north of the republic the required number of people who have decided to go to the polling places is being reached. The number of votes cast here will evidently be sufficient to declare the elections valid.

Now that Ruslan Khasbulatov has withdrawn from the contest it is obvious that Doku Zavgayev will be elected the new head of the republic. He primarily relies on the people in his native Nadterechnyy Rayon in northern Chechnya. But Zavgayev's potential electorate is not limited to this group. In the devastated, war-torn republic there is a very high percentage of people who are nostalgic for the old, "peaceful and plentiful communist times". This era is personified by Zavgayev, former CPSU oblast party committee secretary. Not long ago Russian television showed shots of Zavgayev embracing Yeltsin. "Tears came to my eyes when I saw this. At that moment I was prepared to forgive Yeltsin for the blood that he has shed in Chechnya. At last a politician to whom Moscow talks as an equal has appeared here in our republic," one of Zavgayev's supporters told me.

Quite a paradoxical situation is developing: In 1991 Zavgayev was on Gorbachev's side in the struggle between the Russian and Union leaderships. When Dudayev dissolved parliament, having accused Zavgayev, chairman of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic Supreme Soviet, of supporting the putschists, the current Russian leadership supported the retired general's actions, virtually without clearly expressing its attitude toward this. Today the same people who four years ago assisted in Zavgayev's removal from power have again decided to gamble on this politician. This is apparently the Kremlin's last attempt to placate Chechen society with the local big shot.

But these hopes are rather transparent. The elections could reinforce the split in Chechen society. It seems that the holding of them will finally put paid to the talks with Dudayev. The breaking of the cease-fire and the resumption of hostilities are, I think, inevitable.

Troops Battle Gunmen in Gudermes

LD1412105095 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1032 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 14 (Itar-Tass) — A detachment of federal troops, moved into Gudermes to clear the local hospital of Dudayev's gunmen, who captured it today morning, was attacked by the latter.

Itar-Tass was told by telephone from Groznyy by a representative of the Press Centre of the Command of the Joint Federal Forces in Chechnya that the attackers were stopped by reinforcements rushed to the town. A battle is now under way in Gudermes. Taking part in it are up to 600 Dudayev's gunmen.

The hospital in Gudermes (a town located 30 kilometres to the east of Groznyy) was captured at 4 hours 40 minutes by a gang of gunmen, numbering up to 40 fighters. The personnel managed to evacuate all the patients. Only the Assistant Chief Physician remained in the building. The gunmen have not voiced any demands so far.

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Fighters Seize Gudermes

LD1412173895 Moscow NTV in Russian 1600 GMT 14 Dec 95

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Chechen town of Gudermes is in the center of events today. Around 600 fighters are involved in clashes with the federal troops in the second biggest town of Chechnya. The events in Gudermes began at 0430, after a group of fighters occupied the town hospital. There are casualties on both sides.

To all appearances, the events in Gudermes represent the biggest military clash in Chechnya over the past six months. Communications with Gudermes are down now. That shows that the town is evidently under the complete control of the fighters. Our film crew managed to reach the scene of hostilities with great difficulty. Federal troops fired on their motor vehicle from a helicopter. Aleksey Tereshchenko, our special correspondent, reports by telephone with the latest news from Gudermes.

[Tereshchenko] Last night, Chechen fighters seized Gudermes. That this operation was planned can be seen from the fact that the local inhabitants were warned in advance and left the town. Early in the morning, federal troops began an operation to win Gudermes back. But, unlike the Chechens, they were not so well prepared for it. There was no air cover and Russian troops immediately began to suffer heavy losses. The commander of one of the companies which stormed Gudermes told us that he managed to get through to the town center, where he saw several burned-out APCs. That lieutenant left 14 fighters dead and three combat vehicles in Gudermes today. And that was not the only subunit which stormed the town.

The number of losses will evidently grow since the fighters control the commanding heights on which the hospital is situated. The military deny that there are hostages there and think that the local doctor remained there himself. It will be difficult to find out since the military have encircled the town and are not letting journalists in there. Our film crew was fired upon from a Russian helicopter 3 km from Gudermes. Fortunately nobody was hurt, but a bullet went through the vehicle's roof. Aleksey Tereshchenko NTV, Gudermes.

Khasbulatov on Gudermes Clashes

LD1412161995 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 1300 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ruslan Khasbulatov, former speaker of the Russian parliament, who recently refused to take part in the elections in Chechnya, considers that today's events [in Gudermes] were, sadly, only to be expected:

[Begin Khasbulatov recording] I and many others warned that there would be an escalation of tension precisely as a result of throwing out this totally senseless idea of holding lightning elections. There have been no preparations for these elections and they are taking place against the background of the refusal to hold talks. That is why I refused to take part in this affair. I told the republican Central Electoral Commission: What you have set in motion with this farce, which you call elections, will lead to a sharp polarization of society and bloody clashes. As a result, no one will gain anything, but new military clashes will begin and more people will die — as if we had not had enough deaths already. [end recording]

Grachev Fears Full-Scale Fighting

LD1512114495 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1136 GMT 15 Dec 95

[By Mikhail Shevtsov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 15 (Itar-Tass) — Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev reaffirmed today that he did not rule out a possibility of full-scale combat operations in Chechnya. "My stand remains the same, and its correctness has been proved by life. The situation should be kept under control by a combination of methods. Peace talks should be held, but if the enemy goes to the extremes, if it attacks, regular combat operations are needed with the use of all types of armaments and military hardware," he said.

Speaking before journalists after the signing of two agreements on cooperation in the military sphere and in environmental protection with his Norwegian counterpart Jorgen Kosmo at the Norwegian Embassy, Grachev said that gunmen may conduct an operation, similar to the one which is underway in Gudermes, in any other part of Chechnya, including Groznyy.

In Gudermes the gunmen are trying today to capture the commandant's office and the railway terminal, held by federal troops.

Grachev said that both sides had suffered heavy losses in the fierce fighting, which had taken place in Gudermes last Thursday mostly between Interior Ministry troops and the gunmen, who had captured the hospital building. Army units also joined the fighting, when the gunmen surrounded a check point of the federal troops. The federal troops lost nine men in the operation.

According to Grachev, official representative of President Yeltsin Oleg Lobov is holding an extended meeting today, at which additional decisions may be taken

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with the aim to achieve the stabilization of the situation, including military ones. "I think this grim experience should induce to make some corrections," Grachev pointed out.

He said he had warned that "the early beginning of peace talks, prior to the completion of the military part of the operation in Chechnya may result in major bloodshed for us there." Unfortunately, he continued, my forecast proved to be correct: while the peace talks were going on, the gunmen began to be concentrated in a number of populated localities of the republic, dressing as policemen, railway and other workers and rural dwellers.

Economic Issues

Economics Minister Upbeat on Prospects for 1996

LD1412214195 Moscow ITAR-TASS in Russian 2018 GMT 14 Dec 95

[By Nikolay Styazhkin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] STAVROPOL, December 14 (Itar-Tass) - The year ahead will arrest the production slump, and even a one-two per cent increase in industrial output is realistic, Russian Economics Minister Yevgeniy Yasin said, addressing an economic conference on the Stavropol territorial reform today.

To foster the tendency of improvement, the government is set to have interest rates on bank loans reduced to be accessible to producers, for excessive rates hinder normal production, Yasin said.

According to Yasin, the interest rates might decrease by almost 50 per cent by end-1996 provided that the inflation rate is kept within 25-30 per cent.

The government's current efforts to boost investment in programmes to upgrade technologies for turning out demand-meeting and competitive goods set the stage for curbing inflation within predictability, Yasin said.

The minister stressed that the government planned to attract major investors by taking over part of their risks or by having a stake in projects which had been through reliable feasibility studies. Another tool to encourage investment will be privileged credits from the government.

The next year's federal budget earmarks a total of three trillion roubles, or two times the last year's figure, for the investment-attracting programmes, Yasin said.

Still another lever to contain inflation is to improve tax practices next year, he went on.

Speaking at a news conference concluding his brief trip to the Stavropol territory, Yasin said the government's total debt in wage is 11 trillion roubles.

He promised that the debt would be paid off next year, including to budget-dependent sectors, whose profits declined by 30 per cent over the finishing year.

Asked about the grounds for his optimistic outlook, Yasin said financial stabilisation is within reach, and this has provided crucial prerequisites for solving major economic problems.

Inflation has been appreciably subdued, and the government for the first time over the recent years has withheld money issue and will keep in this line in the future, Yasin said.

He cited inflation of late 1995 to be a monthly 3.5 per cent, the lowest figure since 1992, the year of Russia's venturing into a market economy.

Yasin said he was not sure whether inflation could be kept down to that value in January, always the time of bonuses.

However, the minister said, the government sees the economic scenario with optimism, with downward inflation co-existing with production stabilisation and even partial growth.

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International Affairs

Delegation Attends Bosnia Agreement Signing in Paris

LD1412233795 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1840 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — A Ukrainian delegation, led by Deputy Foreign Minister Volodymyr Khandohiy, today attended the ceremony of signing a general framework agreement on Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was initialled in Dayton, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine has told UNIAN.

On the eve of signing the agreement, the issue of mutual recognition between the five independent states that emerged on the territory of former Yugoslavia was coordinated at a sitting of representatives of the Contact Group, the countries from the former Yugoslavia, and member states of the Organization of Islamic Conference, which was held within the framework of the Paris peace conference.

Khandohiy had meetings at France's Foreign and Defense Ministries, during which practical issues of Ukraine's possible participation in the future operation of multinational forces in Bosnia were discussed.

Minister on Participation in Bosnian Operation

WS1512091095 Kiev KHRESHCHATYK in Ukrainian 13 Dec 95 p 2

[Interview with Anton Buteyko, Ukrainian first deputy foreign minister, by UKRINFORM correspondent Rostyslav Demchuk; in Brussels, date not given: "A Meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council Ended at NATO Headquarters in Brussels" — first paragraph is KHRESHCHATYK introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] **A Ukrainian government delegation has participated in a meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council at NATO Headquarters in Brussels. The delegation was led by First Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine Anton Buteyko, who answered questions by the UKRINFORM correspondent in Brussels.**

[Demchuk] Without veiling it in diplomatic words, the EU and the West European Union consider Bosnia as an arena for demonstrating their military-political potential. Russia and other countries want to participate in operations aimed at implementing peace plans in former Yugoslavia. To what degree would it be important and beneficial for Ukraine to participate in this matter?

[Buteyko] The talk is not simply about a demonstration of force, but a willingness to normalize the situation and bring peace to this region and country. Naturally, the use of the potential of NATO and other countries is very important. For Ukraine this is important from three viewpoints: the universal human or political one, as well as economic and legal ones. Our country, as well as any democratic state, is interested in preventing bloodshed all over the world, as well as in peace and stability. We are thus interested in participating in establishing peace. As for the economic viewpoint, we have lost much potential profits because of the embargo and economic sanctions imposed on Yugoslavia; the Danube artery and other routes for conducting trade and economic cooperation have not operated. It is clear that since is in our national interests we should restore normal ties in the Danube region and other areas. This is in the interest of our country, as well as of those states which are present in this region. According to the UN Charter, we also are obliged to support peace and security and, if needed, provide our military contingents to maintain peace, in accordance with the Security Council's decisions.

[Demchuk] How realistic is Ukraine's participation in the implementation of peace plans in Bosnia? I have in mind the financial aspect. After all, everyone knows that this matter is quite complicated for us because of our difficult situation, and the participation in these operations requires considerable amounts of money. For example, the cost of the participation of our western neighbors — Poland and the Czech Republic — was revealed yesterday. It will amount to $40-60 million per month for the maintenance of one battalion. [as published] How will we be able to resolve this problem?

[Buteyko] The scope of our participation in these measures corresponds to our possibilities. I would like to emphasize that we are searching for both foreign and domestic sources of financial assistance. I think we will find some reasonable compromise, based on our economic situation.

[Demchuk] Could you more precisely say what this could be? Do you have in mind a search for a sponsor, or will this be done by providing some services or equipment? Would it be possible to receive additional money in exchange for this?

[Buteyko] We are trying to set up a special fund, possibly within the framework of NATO. Additionally, Ukraine is ready to provide a battalion as well as 10 large military cargo planes. They may be put into operation on a commercial basis. This is one of the concrete sides of the search for a way out of our difficult financial situation.

[Demchuk] In Brussels you met with the Turkish, Danish, and Polish foreign ministers, the West European

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Union secretary general, and the commander of the Implementation Force in Bosnia. What was the importance of these meetings?

[Buteyko] In addition to the people you have listed, I also met with the Belarusian and Romanian foreign ministers. It was important that we were able to discuss some bilateral issues. First of all, this refers to navigation and ratification of agreements on economic cooperation and treaties fundamental for business ties, such as those on investment protection, avoiding double taxation, and a number of other issues. Had we had to pay separate visits to these countries, this would have cost us dearly.

[Demchuk] How do you assess the work of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council? Is this organization not losing some importance?

[Buteyko] It is not. A majority of ministers from the North Atlantic alliance attended the meeting. In this case, NATO is stepping up its activities aimed at crating a potential for establishing a security system in Europe.

Deputy Foreign Minister Outlines Bilateral Relations

AU1512095895 Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian 12 Dec 95 p 13

[Commentary by Volodymyr Khandohiy, Ukraine's deputy foreign minister, in response to a reader's question: "If You Go to the West...."]

[FBIS Translated Text] We regard bilateral relations with countries of Europe and America in several aspects. First, they are an extremely important factor in further strengthening of the independent Ukrainian state. At the same time, they constitute one of the factors in strengthening international stability and security. Finally, the development of these relations will enable our country to proceed along the road toward reforms, first and foremost in the economic sphere.

Speaking about bilateral relations with the United States, it should be pointed out that they have lately become quite dynamic. As a result of the state visit by Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma to the United States in November 1994, a road was paved toward full-scale mutually advantageous and equal cooperation between our states in the political, economic, scientific-technological, humanitarian, and other spheres. An additional impetus to the development of the Ukrainian-U.S. relations was given by the state visit to Ukraine, in May 1995, by U.S. President Bill Clinton and by Ukrainian Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk's September visit to the United States.

Relations with Western European countries are acquiring the needed concreteness and purposefulness. The greatest progress has been achieved in the sphere of Ukrainian-German relations. It will be no exaggeration to say that partnership relations of trust have been established between leaderships of the two states. This was promoted by our president's visit to Germany in July and visits to Ukraine by Mr. Waigel, federal minister of finance, and the delegation of the FRG Government state secretaries.

A large number of bilateral agreements have lately been signed at interstate and interdepartmental levels with countries of the region.

European nuclear powers — Great Britain and France — granted Ukraine national security guarantees. The Great Britain is ready to give support to Ukraine in practically all leading international organizations: NATO, European Union, and Western European Union. The parliaments of Great Britain, Spain, and Denmark have already ratified the agreement on cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union.

We are shifting our relations with the majority of Central and Eastern European countries into an essentially practical sphere. There exists a common trend toward a certain expansion in the external trade turnover, intensification of border cooperation, and better interaction of law-enforcement bodies in combating organized crime and illegal migration. We are developing fundamentally new organizational forms of mutually advantageous cooperation at many levels in Ukrainian-Polish relations.

Following Leonid Kuchma's state visit to the Czech Republic and the signing of a fundamental political interstate agreement, Ukrainian-Czech relations have also acquired proper dynamics. We are preparing for signing a fundamental political agreement between Ukraine and Croatia.

Extremely important for us is the fact that countries of Central and Eastern Europe give Ukraine active support in its striving to become integrated within European political and economic structures as fast as possible.

The Latin American trend has considerably intensified in our state's international policy. Ukraine was the first state in the post-Soviet area whose top leader visited South America and held fruitful talks there. During Leonid Kuchma's visit to Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, 12 accords were concluded with those countries. It is also significant that the Brazilian president, who, in accordance with the new Constitution, is not supposed to sign any interstate documents, for the first time since 1988, made an exception for our state and put

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his signature under the Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation Between Ukraine and Brazil.

Business relations are being reestablished with the Republic of Cuba: An interstate Ukrainian-Cuban commission for issues of trade-economic and scientific-technological cooperation has been created and functions, and important governmental visits took place.

Kuchma: Keeping Clear of Alliances Best

LD1412213895 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2123 GMT 14 Dec 95

[By Andrey Urban]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] LONDON, December 14 (Itar-Tass) — A strong and sovereign Ukraine is a major factor in European stability, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma said here today before leaving home.

He stressed that Ukraine so far is not seeking membership of NATO.

"The very application of Kiev for the admission to the North Atlantic alliance would have a negative role from all perspectives, primarily from the political one, by acting as a destabilisation factor on the European continent," Kuchma said.

Ukraine should keep clear of any alliances, Kuchma said.

A neutral Ukraine would be a link between the West and East.

"This is the best way for us," he said.

Kuchma Ends Visit to UK; Comments on Duma Elections

LD1412213495 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2022 GMT 14 Dec 95

[By Andrey Urban]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] LONDON, December 14 (Itar-Tass) — The Russian State Duma elections will not affect Ukrainian-Russian relations. Nor will they reflect on the political and economic situation in Ukraine, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma told reporters on completion of his official visit to Great Britain.

"I do not believe the political course of the Russian Federation will change after the elections." Kiev and Moscow have done a lot to bring mutual understanding to a higher level, Kuchma stressed.

"We build our relations with Russia on the basis of equal partnership and mutually beneficial trade," he said.

Speaking of his meting with the British leadership, the Ukrainian President said he "spent fruitful and intensive days in London."

A series of agreements was signed with the purpose of further development of bilateral cooperation, as well as scientific and technical ties.

Besides, Kuchma and the British Defence Minister discussed the current situation in Europe.

"Next February, Ukrainian Defence Minister Valeriy Shmarov will pay an official visit to the United Kingdom," Kuchma said. According to him, Kiev and London are building "constructive relations in the military sphere."

Kuchma left London for Kiev on Thursday evening.

Kuchma Calls For More Military Cooperation With UK

LD1512103495 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 0945 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] London [no date as received] — The situation on the European continent was discussed at a meeting between Ukraine's President Leonid Kuchma and Michael Portillo, British secretary of state for defense.

"Bilateral relations between the Defense Ministries of [Ukraine and Great Britain] should be more active," Kuchma told a news conference for Ukrainian and foreign journalists. Kuchma said Ukraine's Defense Minister Valeriy Shmarov would pay an official visit to Great Britain in February [1996].

According to a UNIAN correspondent, Portillo told correspondents that the possibility is being considered of holding joint maneuvers of British and Ukrainian servicemen on the territory of Ukraine by the end of next year.

"Ukraine occupies an important place in the European security system, because its strategic and geographical location requires this," the British secretary of state for defense said. Portillo believes that European security depends not only on membership in NATO but also on membership in other international organizations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in particular.

Marchuk, Belarusian Prime Minister Sign 4 Pacts

LD1412203295 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1828 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Dec 14 (Interfax - Ukraine) — Ukrainian Prime Minister Yevheniy

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Marchuk and his Belarusian counterpart, Mikhail Chyhir, signed four intergovernmental agreements in Kiev Thursday.

The two countries signed agreements on mutual protection of investments, pension guarantees, youth policy and joint border controls on the Ukrainian-Belarusian border.

Chyhir told journalists that the two republics should do their best to widen bilateral economic cooperation.

"If the visit results in doubling the bilateral turnover next year, we will consider our meeting successful," he said. However, even if it doubles, it will not reach the 1990 level when the figure was three times higher, he added.

Asked about the possibility to sign a free trade treaty between the two countries, Chyhir said "by entering a single customs space with Russia and Kazakhstan, Belarus committed itself to pursue a single customs policy and should observe it."

Chyhir showed his republic's interest in granting Ukraine the most-favored-nation status in bilateral trade.

National Affairs

Kuchma Expectations of Supreme Soviet

LD1312233795 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2032 GMT 13 Dec 95

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Leonid Kuchma told journalists at a polling station in Kiev on December 10 that he voted for cooperation with the Supreme Soviet.

Kuchma expressed the hope that those who prefer good work to politicking will seat in parliament.

IF Note: By-elections were held in 45 constituencies where nobody was elected in 1994.

Seven MPs were elected, notably Prime Minister Yevheniy Marchuk. A second round of elections will be held in 11 constituencies and another attempt will be made in 27 others.

Under the Constitution, there are 450 seats in the Ukrainian parliament. Before December 10, 402 MPs were elected.

Kuchma said that he expects the Supreme Soviet to pass hundreds of legislative acts to provide a legal framework for the government program. He emphasized the need to adopt a new Constitution of Ukraine as soon as possible.

Asked by Interfax what he thought about the vote of no-confidence in prime minister Anatoliy Franchuk in the Crimean parliament, Kuchma said that the latter had every right to do so but that vote increases its responsibility.

Kuchma would not even discuss the possible territorial dispute with Rumania over the isle of Zmeiny. He expressed the hope that the world will not allow a new redrawing of maps.

IF Note: Romanian Foreign Minister Theodor Melescanu said in his country's senate on December 4 that he doubted if Zmeiny is legally or actually part of Ukraine and that a discussion is underway between Kiev and Bucharest about the isle's ownership and legal status. He said that his country may apply ask the International Court to rule on this issue.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry made public a statement Tuesday saying that there is no basis for a dispute or application to the International Court over the isle. The statement suggests that the two countries sign a political treaty soon to put an end to any speculations over the territorial issue.

The Ukrainin-Romanian border was defined by the Paris Peace Treaty of 1948 and updated by a 1948 protocol. The provisions of the latter were integrated in agreements signed by the former USSR and Rumania in 1949-61.

Kuchma said that 1995 was better than the preceding year. He believes that significant political and economic changes took place and Ukraine has improved its position on the world scene in 1995.

Kuchma said, however, that he will not be happy over the internal situation in the country as long as the people are not. He admitted that the living standards of most of the population were low.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Yevheniy Marchuk was glad that the turnout in the Sunday elections was high. He gained 83.71 percent of the votes in Mirgorod, Poltava region.

He told Interfax that the people's trust in the prime minister in the context of an acute crisis and dwindling influence of the authorities is a strong impetus for him to work.

Marchuk said he will work in parliament for a closer cooperation between the government and parliament. He hopes that not only will this cooperation improve the situation in the constituency but it will create a new model for resolving the old conflicts.

Marchuk called for a clear distinction between the powers of the presidential headquarters and the government.

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He added that he will send the president proposals to this effect.

Marchuk 'Discontent' Over Government Work

WS1412092595 Kiev KIYEVSKIYE NOVOSTI in Russian 8 Dec 95 pp 1,2

[Report attributed to KIYEVSKIYE NOVOSTI press service: "The Government: A Tough Work Schedule"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At its regular meeting, the Cabinet of Ministers discussed the question as to how ministries and departments began implementing the action plan developed by the government, accepted by the president, and approved by the Supreme Council. The prime minister, who chaired the meeting, expressed his utmost discontent over the fact that a number of ministries had failed to perform the required work. Yevhen Marchuk warned the ministers:

"Henceforth, a new Cabinet of Ministers work schedule is effective, because the previous pace does not satisfy the government leadership. Any obstacles and delays in the implementation of presidential edicts and government resolutions by ministries and departments will be deemed chiefs' inability to organize the work of their ministries."

The situation with the drafting of normative and other acts, which are considered priority ones for the process of organizing the Cabinet of Ministers' work, was discussed from this demanding position.

The prime minister said the following:

"Unfortunately, I must state that it is already clear that some of our esteemed government members, ministers, and department chiefs has not yet gotten down to work, and do not realize that a new work schedule is being introduced in the government."

This new tough work schedule starts with the fact that from now on every government meeting will begin with a report on the implementation of the action plan and organizational measures envisioned in a Cabinet of Ministers resolution, Yevhen Marchuk emphasized. The prime minister said that some ministers are irresponsible, as a result of which, we are already beginning to skid. This skidding began after a month of practical actions.

"I once again emphasize that it is the minister who is responsible for the problems of his branch, as well as for the unconditional implementation of all measures envisioned in the action plan," the government leader emphatically stated. "I would like everyone to realize," he again emphasized, "that there will be one assessment for everyone: First of all, it will be assessed how one organizes his work and the work of his department to skillfully, quickly, professionally, and harmoniously resolve tasks with which his branch has been charged. These are the same tasks with which we charged ourselves, and which we later approved in the action plan," Yevhen Kyrylovych clarified.

The prime minister recalled the enormous work on every component of this plan, how everything was linked up and coordinated, and how much time this took. And if something breaks in one place now, this inevitably makes other links skid. "We have no right to do that!" the Cabinet of Ministers chairman said. "I will emphasize once again, so that there are no tragedy and tears later: A failure to implement the government action plan, or some of its components for which certain ministry or department is responsible, will be deemed as an inability to organize work and run the branch in general.

"And now about those who violated the defined work schedule, and did not take all measures envisioned for the first stage. Yevhen Marchuk named them: The Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Coal Industry, the Security Service, the Interior Ministry, the Foreign Ministry, the State Property Fund, the State Customs Committee, and the Civic Defense Staff. As a matter of fact, all of them have failed to accomplish tasks concerning the drafting of laws which they should have presented in November.

"We must not waste time on settling of accounts or persuasion. The only thing which will be assessed will be whether a chief is able to run his department or ministry," the Ukrainian prime minister concluded.

Moroz Says By-Election Results 'Predictable'

LD1312233395 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2029 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, December 13 (Interfax - Ukraine) — Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada Chairman Oleksandr Moroz has described as "predictable" the outcome of the December 10 parliamentary by-elections.

Speaking in an Interfax - Ukraine interview, he expressed the opinion that "the election returns mirror the present-day social situation". As he put it, "electors vote for the men capable to handle practical problems".

Parliamentary by-elections were held on December 10 in 45 constituencies in Ukraine, which resulted in the election of seven parliament deputies, including Evhen Marchuk, Ukraine's Prime Minister. A second round has been scheduled in 11 constituencies, and another by-elections — in the remaining 27 ones.

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"The new Election Law shall be elaborated with due regard for the election returns," Moroz said. In particular, according to Moroz, the law should "provide for the proportional election system" (the recent elections were held according to the majority system — IF-U note).

Ukrainian Parliament Speaker disclosed that he would vote for the endorsement in Parliament of E. Marchuk's powers as deputy, "to ensure a better coordination between the actions of the Government and Parliament".

On top of that, O. Moroz pointed out, the Premier's participation in the parliament plenary meetings may serve as an example to be followed by other parliament deputies employed in the executive structures.

Crimea's Franchuk To Submit Proposals on Government

LD1412213595 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1530 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Simferopol — Crimean Prime Minister Anatoliy Franchuk will deliver a report and submit his proposals concerning the government's composition to the Crimean parliament session on 20 December, Crimean parliament Speaker Yevhen Suprunyuk told journalists after his meeting with the head of the Crimean government on 14 December.

The Crimean parliament speaker expressed the hope that cooperation between the Supreme Council and the government of Crimea would be constructive.

Suprunyuk said that during his meeting with the Ukrainian president, which is scheduled for 16 December, he will be defending the Crimean parliament's decision of 8 December to vote no-confidence in Prime Minister Anatoliy Franchuk.

Crimea Leader on Necessity of Government Reshuffle

LD1412214795 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1610 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Simferopol — "I believe it is necessary to raise the issue of replacing certain persons in the government and I will recommend that the session should do this, no matter what decision the deputies take," Anatoliy Franchuk told a news conference on 14 December.

Franchuk said he will resign somewhat later, in line with his election promises.

As regards the situation that has arisen in relations between parliament and the government, the prime minister said: "It is only logical that one branch of power should prevail over another; however, I would not like these relations to grow into a crisis."

Economic Issues

Development Plan Presented to Legislature

WS1412100895 Kiev UKRINFORM in English 0859 GMT 14 Dec 95

[From the "Current Events" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On Tuesday, December 12 Economics Minister Vasyl Hureyev presented the government's plan for the nation's social and economic development in 1996 to the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada at its plenary "day of government" session.

Mr. Hureyev stated the planned figure of GDP at 7,140 trillion krb, of which 32.5 percent will be used to pay wages, 23.6 percent will be profits, and 8.8 percent will go to the State by way of payable taxes. According to the Economics Minister, the state's financial stabilization will be achieved through an efficient system of control over spending of budgetary funds and through reducing the national budget's deficit to 6 percent of GDP.

Stabilization credit from international financial institutions were stated by the speaker as the major weapon to fight inflation with. A total of 2 billion US dollars is expected to be available to Ukraine by way of these in 1996 including 1.14 b. USD from IMF and 0.9 b. USD from the World Bank.

These financial resources are expected to provide adequate props for the national budget and payment balance, Mr. Hureyev said. According to him, IMF means will be channeled into making stable the monetary-credit system's performance, while the World Bank's credits will finance Ukraine's critical imports, support the national budget and finance foreign capital investments in the national economy of Ukraine.

Touching on the subject of Ukraine's state external debt the Economics Minister said that, as of January 1, 1996, it would likely reach the mark of 6.6 billion US dollars, of which 4,590 million, or almost 70 percent, would be Ukraine's indebtedness to CIS nations 820 million to international financial institutions and one billion for certain credits guarantied by the Ukrainian government. According to the Economics Minister, the draft national budget for 1996 provides for 275.9 trillion krb outlays for servicing and extinguishment of the external debt, which will be roughly equivalent to 1,266 million US dollars, as exchange rate forecasts suggest. The bulk of these outlays, that is, 1 b. USD, or 82 percent, will serve to repay Ukraine's state debt to CIS nations. Payments under credit agreements and contracts with

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the USA, Germany and France will amount to 105.6 million US dollars. Outlays for interest payments to the World Bank and redemption of other credits were stated by Mr. Hureyev at 57.9 million US dollars. However, as the Economics Minister admitted, Ukraine's available financial resources could hardly provide a reliable basis for accurate calculations, and the national economy's current status will most certainly require new additional loans from international financial institutions in 1996.

Legislature Resolves To Keep Taxes at '95 Level

WS1412100695 Lvov INFOBANK in English 0839 GMT 14 Dec 95

[From the "News Service" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Next year in Ukraine no new taxes or compulsory payments will be introduced and all tax rates will remain at 1995 levels. This was outlined in the parliamentary resolution on "Basic regulations concerning Ukraine's taxation policies" which was passed on December 12 at an evening session of parliament.

The resolution allows two years for working out Ukraine's tax code and the approval of basic laws concerning tax reform. According to the head of the parliamentary commission on finances and banking activities, Viktor Suslov, in order to do this parliament will have to pass close to 30 laws and legislative acts.

The goal of tax reforms is to ease the pressure of taxation, stimulate national manufacturing, and limit the amount of non-critical imports. Mr. Suslov said that the limit on the amount of the gross national product to be distributed through the budget will be no higher than 45-47 percent of the GNP. Mr. Suslov also said that only parliament should introduce new taxes or changes in tax laws.

Government To Have Reserve Fund

LD1412213095 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1610 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — The Supreme Council of Ukraine has approved in the first reading a provision on setting up a reserve fund of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. The provision stipulates that the reserve fund will amount to two percent of the Ukrainian state budget expenditure. Allocations from the reserve fund will be made on instructions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine following substantiated written requests submitted by ministries and departments and conclusions by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine on the expediency and efficiency of making allocations from the reserve fund.

The provision also stipulates that the reserve fund will be used to reimburse expenses connected with emergency situations, elimination of aftermath of natural calamities and accidents, settlement of debts that accumulated due to failure to repay on time credits granted under the guarantees of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to implement state projects. Not more than 20 percent of the reserve fund will be used to finance measures that can not be envisaged at the time when the state budget was approved.

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Belarus

Minsk To Honor All Obligations Under CFE Treaty

LD1412185295 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1552 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MINSK, Dec 14 (Interfax-West) — Belarus will honor all its commitments under the Agreement on Conventional Forces in Europe [CFE], even if Russia declines to comply with some provisions of the agreement, Foreign Minister Uladzimir Syanko told a news conference in Minsk on Thursday.

Russia's Defense Minister Pavel Grachev, who paid an official visit to Belarus late last week, said that Russia may suspend its compliance with some points of the agreement, if NATO decides to expand eastwards.

According to Syanko, Belarus has already honored most points of international agreements in terms of removing strategic nuclear missiles from its territory and destroying conventional weapons. At this stage Belarus would gain nothing economically or militarily from suspending compliance with the agreement, Syanko said.

When asked about his ministry's plans concerning the opening of diplomatic missions abroad, Syanko said the main difficulty lies in the lack of funds. Nevertheless next year Belarus intends to transform its general consulates in the Hague and Rome into embassies, and open diplomatic missions in Argentina, Hungary, Egypt, Canada, Turkey and Sweden in 1997.

At present members of his ministry are engaged in preparations for President Alyaksandr Lukashenka's visit to Davos, where he will attend an economic forum, Syanko said. According to him, lately Lukashenka has received invitations to visit India, South Korea and Portugal.

Destruction of Military Equipment Detailed

WS1512105695 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0913 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The first calendar period in the extra stage given for the reduction of conventional weapons of the Belarusian army under the auspices of the on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty ran out on 14 December, at the 140th Barysaw Repair Works of the Ministry of Defence of the republic. Over two months the specialists of the firm have destroyed 137 war tanks and 142 armoured military vehicles.

According to information received by BELAPAN over the second calendar period, which will last from 15 December to 19 February 1996, the works must "make a reduction" of 194 tanks and 115 military vehicles belonging to the infantry. These numbers include 145 T-55, 20 T-62 and 32 T-72 tanks, as well as 65 BMP-1 infantry vehicles, which will be destroyed by being taken apart piece by piece. Another 50 BMP-1's will be re-equipped for further use in a national agricultural capacity.

In order to ascertain that Belarus had carried out the planned amount of reduction by the end of the first calendar period and to ensure the beginning of the second period a French military inspection group, under the auspices of the aforementioned Treaty, arrived in Barysaw. It is already known that Belarus has promised to fully complete the reduction of the conventional weapons of its army by 26 April 1996, which had already earlier been notified to all the states subject to the Treaty.

Article Analyzes Grachev's Visit to Belarus

WS1512100095 Minsk SVABODA in Belarusian 12 Dec 95 p 2

[Commentary by Aleh Gruzdzilovich: "Belarusian Army Is Getting Stronger in Russian Army's Embrace"]

[FBIS Translated Text] **The visit to Belarus by Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev ended with the signature of as many as 18 important joint documents. At the news conference held after the documents were signed, Pavel Grachev and Belarusian Defense Minister Leanid Maltsaw underscored the successful nature of the negotiations which resulted in the two states' further military rapprochement.**

The two defense ministers arrived at the ceremony of signing documents and the news conference two hours later than it had been scheduled. It was announced that they had been delayed in Brest, where Pavel Grachev had visited the 38th Mobile Forces Brigade and the Brest Fortress Memorial. Pavel Grachev mentioned the two visits at the news conference. The 38th Brigade was mentioned as an indicator of the fact that the Belarusian Army is undergoing proper reform which does not diminish the combat readiness of troops. In addition, the troops are fully manned (the Russian defense minister even felt jealous of that fact). As for the Brest Fortress, Pavel Grachev believes that it is a common symbol of courage and heroism for the two states and their armies.

To make a long story short, those examples were cited to support the idea of military partnership between Russia and Belarus. "There was no rush during the drafting of documents, unlike in Sochi, where negotiations with Ukraine were held" — this was how Pavel Grachev praised his Belarusian colleagues, comparing them to Ukrainian generals.

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Indeed, one can say that decisive steps were made toward establishing a military union between the two states. For instance, the ministers approved the agreement on joint activities to ensure regional security. This agreement is being prepared for signing by the heads of state, and the two military ministers already did what lies in their competence. The defense ministers also signed the protocol on joint activities of the Air Defense Troops. Under the provisions of the protocol, Russian troops will be permitted to use the Belarusian airfield near Bykhaw, and Belarusian units can count on Russian test ranges.

Interaction in the production of military hardware is another important field of cooperation. A protocol of intent was signed on that issue, too, which stipulates that in the future Belarus will maintain active contacts with Russia's arms market. A protocol of intent was signed on personnel training and the procedure of transferring officers from one army to the other, provided those officers express such a wish. We all know that if a country loses a monopoly on training its military personnel, it also loses part of its military sovereignty. Afghanistan and other puppet states provided the best historic evidence of that. Unfortunately, Belarus is also making a step in that direction, although by doing so it resolves the financial side of the problem. I would like to remind you that immediately after Belarus became an independent state it aimed at training military personnel within the Republic. In those days Russia even hailed that idea, because it did not want to allocate additional expenditures. Pavel Grachev currently has a different opinion: "For some reason, we used to calculate how much it costs to train officers and how much money we owe each other. Why did we do that?" Thus, nobody wants to calculate anything anymore, or else different kinds of expenditures are currently calculated — strategic ones. In this way or another, Russia now agrees to train our officers and we are ready to provide this opportunity, as if we have forgotten that free cheese is only found in mousetraps.

The agreement on free transfer of officers from one army to the other fully corresponds to the spirit of other personnel agreements. Will this not mean that Belarusian officers will reorient toward the east and our generals will soon be faced with the problem of understrengthed units? Belarusian Defense Minister Leanid Maltsaw does not regard this as a danger: "On the contrary, there are more Russian Army officers willing to serve in Belarus than the other way around." In Maltsaw's opinion, the agreement is advantageous for both individual officers and the Army in general, given that the Army will acquire more personnel.

The minister had no time to explain to SVABODA why there is an outflow of officers from Russia to Belarus. I would only mention one factor — the Chechen War. We cannot rule out that at present, when Russia fights a war in Chechnya, [ethnic] Belarusian officers who serve in the Russian Army are also exposed to the danger of being sent to the "Chechen hell." Therefore, they seek a transfer to Belarus. However, once the Chechen conflict is resolved, the process will acquire the opposite nature, given that wages in the Russian Army are much higher than in Belarus. Then Russia, which experiences a great undersupply of officers, will start resolving its personnel problems at the expense of Belarus. It is curious that the issue of swearing allegiance to a foreign state does not worry the Russian generals at all. Pavel Grachev brushed off that question the same way someone would brush off a pesky fly: "And so what that they have sworn allegiance to a foreign state? We will reach an agreement." In other words, a mutual clearing procedure will be applied to resolve the loyalty oath issue.

What did the Belarusian side achieve at the negotiations? The signing of the schedule of the removal of SS-25 nuclear missiles from Belarusian territory has been cited as the main positive result. Russia confirmed its intention to implement the agreement as soon as 1996. Leanid Maltsaw maintained in an interview with a SVABODA correspondent that the removal of Russian missiles had never been suspended, and the cited agreement is not anything extraordinary. Leanid Maltsaw added: "We coordinate the schedules of removals every year, and we did the same thing again. According to the agreement, both Russian regiments will be redeployed in 1996 along with the remaining missiles."

At the end of Pavel Grachev's news conference, the following "military secret" was revealed to reporters: Some time in January, the Russian defense minister is going to pay the same kind of visit to Kazakhstan. The point is that the CIS collective security treaty is virtually in a stalemate, and therefore Russia intends to beef up collective defense by means of bilateral treaties. As we can see, Russia accomplished that in Belarus, unlike in Ukraine. Kazakhstan is next in line. Thus, the idea of establishing a military bloc on the territory of the former USSR, which would be a counterbalance to NATO, is being materialized. In the course of realizing those plans Belarus is gradually losing the status of a country striving for neutrality in line with its Constitution. The results of Pavel Grachev's visit to Minsk were illustrative proof of that: Nobody even dreams about Belarus's neutrality any more. The same people nevertheless claim that relations with the Russian Army strengthen the Belarusian Armed Forces. One may ask: Is this real concern for state sovereignty?

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Chyhir Urges Joint Actions on Economic Crisis

WS1512100195 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 0400 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Neither side will be able to overcome the current crisis in Ukraine and Belarus alone. The national economic mechanism of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, which was once one entity, is currently broken. We have become convinced, however, that it is possible to give to the respective national capitals political authority, but this cannot be done in the economic field. This was stated by Belarusian Prime Minister Mikhail Chyhir during a meeting with Ukrainian government leader Yevhen Marchuk. A Belarusian governmental delegation is currently on an official two-day visit to Ukraine.

Moldova

TV Program Assesses Special Status for Dniester

AU1412154695 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1930 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau 12/12/1995 [BASA-press] — Dniester will not be involved in the reimbursement of loans made by international financial organizations to Moldova, Moldovan Deputy Speaker Dumitru Diacov, stated in a Moldovan TV program devoted to the publication of the draft special status for Dniester. Such fears were earlier made public by certain Tiraspol leaders. Diacov said the Dniester economic sector is disadvantaged by the limited access to foreign funds. This is due to the unsettled conflict, he said.

The TV program also hosted two Dniester representatives — Grigoriy Volovoy, doctor in political science, and Andrey Safonov, leader of the Movement for Dniester's Development and former education minister, whose alleged centrist attitudes are supported by Tiraspol industrialists.

Both Dniester messengers favored "simultaneous demilitarization of Moldova and Dniester." They said thus the dispute over the Dniester soldiers' subordination after the special status is granted would be eliminated. Moldovan officials say the military should be subordinated under the central government, while Tiraspol favors their subordination under local authorities.

Dniester representatives insisted that Moldovans should realize that the Dniester republic exists, and this could represent an important step forward in the Chisinau-Tiraspol talks.

Representatives of the Moldovan Parliament said Moldovan authorities would never recognize the self-proclaimed state in the eastern districts. However, they are absolutely aware that the Dniester dispute cannot be settled by an imposition from the Moldovan officials.

Aurel Cepoi of the Socialist Unity Faction said he does not support the skeptical attitude toward granting Dniester a special status. He contended that the only alternative to special prerogatives would be military confrontations which are inadmissible.

Daily Publishes Draft Law on Dniester Special Status

AU1412154195 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1930 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau 12/12/1995 [BASA-press] — The governmental newspaper MOLDOVA SUVERANA (SOVEREIGN MOLDOVA) published today the draft law on special juridical status for Dniester. However, at the recent parliamentary debates many members of Parliament argued its publication is untimely.

According to Aurel Cepoi of the Socialist Unity, by publishing the draft authorities do not intend to consult the public opinion, but to show their desire to solve this question. Cepoi told BASA-press that he doubts a rapid settlement of the Dniester conflict, since "in Dniester there exists a territorial formation with ministries, power and administrative structures, etc... I am sure no constitutional leadership from Chisinau will vote for a draft law which leads to the split of one part from the body of the country."

Deputy Ion Ungureanu, dismissed from head of parliamentary Commission on State Security upon his adherence to the Moldovan Party of Revival and Conciliation, told BASA-press that some members of Parliament are not right to say that the Parliament did not draft the law on special status and therefore may not take decisions as to its publication. "Initially the document was drafted by a parliamentary commission headed by Nicolae Andronic, at President Snegur's request. The difference between the initial version and the published one lies in the fact that the former does not envision the notion 'republic' but 'autonomous region.' I believe that the inclusion of the term 'republic' is the maximum concession we can accept," Ungureanu said. He said that the publication of the draft was opportune since the Dniester population is ignorant of Moldovan authorities' intentions, being deprived of the access to Chisinau media.

Tiraspol Disregards Chisinau Draft Law

AU1412180995 Chisinau INFOTAG in English 1930 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tiraspol, December 13 (INFOTAG) — The recent parliamentary debates over the

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Dniester status draft law and its publication in the press can in no particular way influence the problem solution, a Tiraspol official, who asked to withhold his name, told INFOTAG.

The Tiraspol stance remains as before: The self-proclaimed republic exists de facto, and what the sides really need is not to negotiate the Dniester status but rather to divide plenary powers between Chisinau and Tiraspol, the man said.

"The Moldovan legislature have all rights to discuss whatever they like, but the debates cannot bring the sides closer to each other in the conflict settlement, we believe. This conflict can only be settled on the basis of a mutually acceptable decision reached in the negotiation process. For the time being, this process has been frozen — for God knows what time," the official explained.

Last Friday, President Mircea Snegur said to journalists that the separatist leader Igor Smirnov had phoned to him before the parliamentary debates, and expressed concern about the Moldovan Parliament's decision to get more actively involved in the conflict settlement process.

Still earlier, the Dniester state secretary Valeriy Litskay, who heads the Tiraspol expert team, stated that "the November 29 summit is supposed to be held in Tiraspol, and we are not going to travel to Chisinau." Currently, the two expert teams do not meet, either, Litskay said.

The negotiation mediators — the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] Permanent Mission to Moldova, the Russian and Ukrainian presidents' special envoys — are undertaking all possible efforts to resume the talks. Vladlen Vasev of Russia and Volodymir Furkalo of Ukraine published their official statements on the issue, and urged the sides to resume the dialogue.

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Tajikistan

UN Envoy To Discuss Progress in Inter-Tajik Talks

LD1412195095 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1705 GMT 14 Dec 95

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 14 (Interfax) - In the course of his consultations with Russian officials, special envoy of the U.N. secretary General Ramiro Piriz Ballon will discuss further progress in the Inter-Tajik talks, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Albert Chernyshev told Interfax.

Piriz Ballon, who is to come to Moscow from Ashgabat on Thursday afternoon, plans to meet with representatives of Russia's Foreign Ministry and possibly the Federal Border Service, Chernyshev said.

"It's normal diplomatic work" to hold such consultations in Moscow, according to Chernyshev. "Ramiro Piriz Ballon wants to consult the most influential country-supervisor at the Inter-Tajik negotiations on how to advance them further on."

Characterizing the fifth round of negotiations between Dushanbe and the opposition which was started in Ashgabat on November 30, Chernyshev recognized that the dialogue "is going on with difficulties." At the same time "the parties were able to remove the greater part of tension which existed in the period from November 30 till December 12-13."

To this effect Chernyshev welcomed the statement on ceasing mutual hostile operations signed by the delegations on December 13. "We view this statement as the first positive sign."

Ramiro Piriz Ballon will stay in Moscow for one-two days and then he will return to Ashgabat.

Opposition: Russia Has Deciding Voice at Tajik Talks

LD1312210195 (Clandestine) Radio Voice of Free Tajikistan in Tajik 0600 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] According to a Paik-i Khorasan correspondent from Ashgabat, Ramiro Piriz-Ballon, special envoy of the UN secretary general in Tajikistan, held separate consultations with opposition and (?government) negotiating delegations yesterday afternoon. Following these consultations, Ramiro Piriz-Ballon gave an interview to journalists on the results, expressed his satisfaction, and said that it was decided that the conflicting sides in Tajikistan will sit at the negotiating table and that talks will officially start today at 1100.

According to Piriz-Ballon, the issue of approving a statement on observing and respecting the Tehran cease-fire agreement and ending all hostilities will be a subject for consideration today.

Yesterday morning Ramiro Piriz-Ballon had a meeting with Aleksandr Oblov, an observer from the Russian Federation at the Tajik peace talks in Ashgabat. Russia, which is one of the observers and an interested country as concerns the problems in Tajikistan, may have an important role to play in deciding whether the peace talks conclude successfully or not. Its representative, Aleksandr Oblov, is the real adviser for the negotiating delegation of the Dushanbe regime, too.

According to our experts, Ramiro Piriz-Ballon asked the Russian envoy to halt the participation of his country's air force in the bombing raids on the territory under the opposition's control, and to demand flexibility from the regime's delegation throughout the negotiations so that Tajikistan's problems can be resolved peacefully.

Government, Opposition Committed to Cease-Fire Agreement

LD1312161495 Tehran IRNA in English 1554 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dushanbe, Dec. 13, IRNA — Representatives of Tajikistan Government and the opposition signed an agreement on Wednesday announcing their commitment to the cease-fire agreement the republic signed in Tehran last year.

The agreement, signed in the course of the fifth round of the Tajik peace talks, in Ashgabat, capital of Turkmenistan, the two sides condemned violation of cease-fire in Tavildarreh and Shurabad, east of Tajikistan.

The agreement was signed by the prime minister of Tajikistan and deputy chairman of the Tajikistan Islamic Movement after one week of suspension of the talks.

The U.N. special envoy and representatives from Iran, Russia, Pakistan and Turkmenistan supervise the talks.

A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran present at the talks told IRNA on Wednesday that the agreement is a great progress in the trend of the Ashgabat talks. He added that it is expected that the two sides work out a peaceful solution by showing greater flexibility.

The two sides are to continue consultation talks under the supervision of representatives till next Monday when the formal talks will resume.

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President Rakhmanov Broadens Ties With India

LD1312234395 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2032 GMT 13 Dec 95

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A package of bilateral agreements, including the declaration on broadening friendship and cooperation, was signed in Delhi during President Rakhmanov's visit to India, the Tajik president's Press Secretary Zafar Saidov told Interfax.

Rakhmanov's official visit to India began on December 11.

The sides have also drafted a number of intergovernmental agreements on the mutual encouragement and protection of investments, on ways of avoiding dual taxing, on scientific and technical cooperation and on cooperation in health care, customs services, telecommunications and environmental protection.

To quote Saidov, these documents are expected to lay a foundation for broader bilateral cooperation.

From Bombay Rakhmanov will fly out to Abu Dhabi on December 13 for a four-day state visit.

His talks with the leaders of the United Arab Emirates are expected to produce an agreement on the encouragement and mutual protection of investments, on tourist exchanges, on trade and economic cooperation and on cooperation in labor emigration and employment, the training of personnel, vocational training, culture, science, engineering, education, health care and sports.

The sides are also to document the extension of a credit to the Tajik government and sign a protocol on bilateral consultations between the two countries' foreign ministries.

Meanwhile, the inter-Tajik talks continued in Ashgabat Wednesday after the opposition delegation announced its decision to suspend the talks last Saturday in view of the continuing combat operations in the Pamirs region.

IF note: A group of observers representing the joint commission and the U.N. military observers' mission, which arrived in the Tavil-Dary region on insistence from the opposition, continues to examine the situation in the zone controlled by the 12th post of the Moskovskiy border detachment where shooting continues between opposition militants and Tajik border guards.

Leader of the government delegation, First Deputy Prime Minister Makhmadsaid Ubaydullayev told Interfax that "the sides have come to the point from which everything should have started 13 days ago." He also said that today's session confirms the government's readiness to "work productively and solve all problems hampering the talks."

In his turn, leader of the opposition delegation Akbar Turadzhonzoda told Interfax that the parties had reaffirmed in written form their adherence to the Tehran cease-fire agreement and condemned violations of this agreement and pledged not to violate it in the future. He also announced that the U.N. secretary general's special envoy Ramiro Piriz Ballon is going to Moscow for consultations on December 14. (Earlier, Ramiro Piriz Ballon had stated that he might go to Moscow because Russia is an observer country which is playing an important role during the talks.)

In addition to this, leader of the opposition delegation resolutely condemned the murder of BBC correspondent in Dushanbe Mukhiddin Olimpur and expressed hope for an objective investigation of the murder.

IF note: BBC correspondent Mukhiddin Olimpur was shot in the head three days ago. According to one version, he did not suit the irreconcilable wing of the armed opposition which is thus trying either to foil the inter-Tajik talks, or to impose its terms on the government delegation, accusing the Tajik authorities of inability to ensure the security of the citizens.

Five journalists were killed in Tajikistan in 1995.

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Azerbaijan

Iran's Va'ezi on Four Day Official Visit

Guliyev, Va'ezi Discuss Ties

LD1412143695 Tehran IRNA in English 1419 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, Dec. 14, IRNA — Iranian deputy foreign minister for Euro-American affairs, Mahmud Va'ezi, in a meeting with prime minister of Azerbaijan, Fuat Guliyev, here Wednesday [13 December] surveyed the programs of economic cooperation between the two countries for the coming Christian year.

Guliyev referring to importance of economic relations of the republic with Iran said that he had given the necessary instructions to all organizations of the Azerbaijan republic for facilitating relations with Iran.

He expressed hope that effective steps will be taken towards further promotion of bilateral relations in the forthcoming session of the joint Iran-Azerbaijan Economic Commission, to be held in Tehran in the near future.

The Azeri prime minist underlined determination of Baku to expand economic relaitons with Tehran and described the prospect of bilateral relations as promising.

Va'ezi commenting on existing potentials for cooperation between the two countries, expressed hope that Tehran-Baku relations will be further consolidated.

Va'ezi arrived in Baku on a four-day official visit on Monday.

National Assembly Head on Relations

LD1412163695 Tehran IRNA in English 1615 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, Dec. 14, IRNA — Chairman of the Azeri National Assembly Rasul Guliyev here Wednesday [14 December] said that Tehran and Baku enjoy close and cordial relations.

He made the remark in a meeting with the visiting Iranian Deputy Foregin Minister for Euro-American Affairs Mahmud Va'ezi.

He announced his readiness to remove any obstacle on the way of expansion of ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Appreciating Iran's key role in establishment of regional stability, Guliyev called for strengthening of economic cooperation among regional states.

The Azeri official further stressed implementation of agreements reached between the two countries as well as to take practical steps towards promotion of bilateral ties.

A formal letter of Majlis speaker 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri was submitted to his Azeri counterpart in the meeting.

In his letter Nateq-Nuri congratulated Guliyev on holding the recent elections in that republic.

Guliyev expressed hope that he would pay a visit to the Islamic republic in the near future.

Va'ezi, heading a political delegation, arrived in the Azeri capital Monday on a four-day visit.

Iran 'Undecided' About Shakh-Deniz Field

LD1412174595 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1441 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BAKU, Dec 14 (Interfax) — Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmud Va'ezi has dismissed the rumor that Iran had dropped its intention to participate in developing Azerbaijan's gas and oil field Shakh-Deniz in the Caspian Sea.

"Iran is still undecided about its participation in developing that oil field," Va'ezi told a news conference in the Azerbaijani capital Baku on Wednesday.

Va'ezi said that he had discussed that problem with the Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev. "We have received additional information, which I will make known to the Iranian leadership. We shall study it and then announce the results," Va'ezi said.

Shakh-Deniz is a gas condensate field lying under the Caspian sea bottom 40-50 kilometers southeast of Baku at a depth of 60 to 550 meters. It is estimated at 400 billion cubic meters of gas, 200 million tonnes of condensate and 100 million tonnes of oil. Baku plans to conclude contracts with a number of foreign companies to develop that field.

About the status of the Caspian Sea, Va'ezi said it had been agreed to set up an Iranian-Azerbaijani conciliatory committee. "The Caspian washes the shores of five countries and it is up to them to produce a formula that would suit all," Va'ezi said.

He said until that problem was settled, unilateral development of resources in the Caspian would be undesirable.

Asked about his attitude to Azerbaijan's new constitution, which declares part of the Caspian as Azerbaijani territory, Va'ezi said he foresaw no special problems, because the constitution referred to a zone whose borders were still to be drawn.

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Va'ezi said he was satisfied with the results of his visit to Baku. Va'ezi believes that there are no problems in Iranian-Azerbaijani relations, which will receive a new impetus when President Aliyev visits Iran shortly.

Va'ezi said that in Baku he had discussed a number of major bilateral projects for 1996, including the laying of a pipe-line to Nakhichevan, an autonomous republic of Azerbaijan, the construction of a cement mill there and the opening of a special account to make banking operations easier. It was also agreed to increase electricity supplies from Iran to Nakhichevan. Va'ezi said a simpler mechanism would be established to supply fuel from Azerbaijan across Iran to Nakhichevan.

Va'ezi said that Azerbaijan and Iran would soon start drafting three agreements: on guarantees for Iranian investments into Azerbaijan, on the prevention of dual taxation, and on lowering customs barriers.

About Iran's relations with Russia, Va'ezi said Tehran was very satisfied with their level and potential. He recalled that Iranian-Russian ties were not aimed against third countries.

Va'ezi described Iran's ties with Armenia as purely economic. He recalled that Iran's trade with Azerbaijan totaled $300 million - $350 million and with Armenia, $30 million.

Iran's Va'ezi Holds News Conference

LD1412180395 Tehran IRNA in English 1338 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, Dec. 14, IRNA — The visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Euro-American Affairs Mahmud Va'ezi here Wednesday said that Iran and Azerbaijan have no unsolvable problem. Va'ezi, who made the remark in a press conference here Wednesday, said that his talks with the Azeri officials included drawing up the plan for bilateral cooperation for 1996, pipeline project for transfer of natural gas from Iran to the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan and construction of a cement plant in Azerbaijan.

Va'ezi further told reporters that proposals by Azeri officials requesting increase in Iran's export of electricity to Nakhichevan and transfer of fuel from Azerbaijan to Nakhichevan, were accepted.

Asked to comment on publication of anti-Azerbaijan articles in Iranian press, Va'ezi said that what counts in Tehran-Baku relations is the official stands and not what the press say. He added that in countries where there is freedom of press reflection of different viewpoints and articles was a common practice.

He underlined the important role of press in expansion of ties between countries and expressed hope that with the formation of a joint press commission misunderstandings will be removed.

As for the recent demonstrations in various Iranian cities against ratification of the new constitution in Azerbaijan, he said they were reaction of people to events in a neighboring country.

On Iran's economic relations with Azerbaijan and Armenia, Va'ezi said that Iran's ties with Azerbaijan were at least ten times more extensive than with Armenia.

On Tehran-Moscow relations, he said they were steadily growing. Va'ezi added that all agreements inked between Iran and Russia were either fully executed or were at the process of being implemented and the U.S. has failed in marring Tehran-Moscow relations.

Va'ezi, who arrived here on Monday on a four-day official visit, added that Russia is an independent country and will not allow others to intervene in its foreign policy. He said cooperation between Iran and Russia was to the benefit of regional stability and security. Va'ezi described as "logical" Iran's stance on the Caspian Sea and said that exploitation of the Caspian Sea resources before formulation of its legal regime will result in disorder.

In conclusion the Iranian official said that his talks with the Azeri officials were positive and expressed hope that Tehran-Baku relations will grow stronger.

Va'ezi on Relations, Joint Economic Plan

NC1412191495 Baku TURAN in English 0927 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku/14.12.95/TURAN—A press-conference of Mahmud Va'ezi, the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister took place late yesterday. Before the conference the journalists were introduced eight citizens of Azerbaijan released on the eve from captivity in Armenia with mediation of Iran.

Mahmud Va'ezi said that he had very important meetings with the president Heydar Aliyev and other representatives of the Azeri leadership during his two day visit to Baku. " Perspectives of the development of bilateral relations - interparliamentary, economic, political, cultural and humanitarian were discussed. I am satisfied with the results of my visit. There are not any problems in our relation today," Va'ezi said.

He said that the question on Iran's participation in the development of the Azeri offshore field "Shahdeniz"

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were discussed during negotiations. According to Iranian diplomat that question was brought up by the president of Azerbaijan. Va'ezi said that he would deliver this information to the Iranian authorities. "We will study the received information and will give answer soon," the Iraninan diplomat said.

Responding the question of TURAN about the attitude of official Teheran to critical publications in the Iranian press addressed to president Geydar Aliyev due his course on rapproachment with the U.S. and Israel Mahmud Vayezi said that such articles were very rare. "It is freedom of speech, freedom of the press. The number of positive articles with kind words addressed to Aliyev are more often," the diplomat said.

"We respect Geydar Aliyev . During his being in office our relations develop very dynamically in many trends," Va'ezi said. According to him, an agreement was obtained during the negotiations on the visit of the president Aliyev to Iran.

Responding the question on mass anti-Azeri addresses in Tabriz and other cities of Iran after adoption of the new Constitution in Azerbaijan Va'ezi said "Iran is a free state." He said that such addresses could take place in the northern provinces of Iran bordering with Azerbaijan. He thinks that "such addresses could become the result of influence of those who oppose the new Constitution in Azerbaijan itself on the Azeri population of the northern provinces of Iran."

Va'ezi said that during the talks in Baku they discussed joint economic plan for 1996. Some large projects were scheduled: the construction of gas pipeline from Iran to Nakhichevan, of cement plant in Nakhichevan and railway Astara-Astara.

Besides, the parties supported activation of co-operation within the borders of regional organization ECO, development of co-operation of pre-Caspian states. "Some political questions were also discussed. Iran supports effort aimed at cease of the Armenian-Azeri conflict," Va'ezi said.

According to him, in the near future the parties will concentrate their attention on two documents: on guarantees of investments to the economy of Azerbaijan, on avoiding of double taxation and on simplification of the Customs barriers.

Concerning position of Iran on the status of the Caspian sea Mahmud Va'ezi noted that according to Tehran five pre-Caspian states should work out common position on that problem. "Position of Iran has not been worked out yet, it would be better if the parties keep themselves from use of the resources of the Caspian," Iranian diplomat said. Va'ezi also said that it was agreed to create in Baku a single joint working committee for working over the status of the Caspian.

Concerning the relations with Russia Va'ezi said that Iran tries to have good relations with all countries, including the neighbours. "These relations are developing normally but they are not aimed against third countries," Iranian diplomat noted.

Georgia

Success Reported in Georgian-Ossetian Talks in Moscow

LD1412215295 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1251 GMT 14 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS diplomatic correspondent Yuriy Kozlov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 14 Dec — Talks between political experts of the Georgian and South Ossetian sides were held in the Russian capital on 13 December with Russian mediation. The participants succeeded in making an important step along the path toward achieving a full-scale settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. The ITAR-TASS correspondent was told today in the Russian Foreign Ministry that as a result of the talks, which took place with the participation of representatives of the OSCE and the republic of North Ossetia-Alania, preliminary agreement was reached on a "Memorandum on the primary steps to ensure security and strengthen mutual trust between the sides in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict."

This document will be presented for examination to the sides' leadership, and after this the place and time for it to be signed will be decided. The experts hope that the memorandum can be signed before the end of this year.

The talks in Moscow were a continuation of the work begun in Vladikavkaz in October. Boris Pastukhov, deputy foreign minister of the Russian Federation, represented the Russian mediators at the meeting. He said: "the Russian side intends to continue to do everything necessary to achieve a solution for the complicated problems that gave rise to the conflict in South Ossetia and promote the development of good-neighborly relations between the peoples of the Caucasus."

Steps Taken To Resolve Ossetian Crisis

LD1412184595 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1609 GMT 14 Dec 95

[By Tenghiz Pachkoria]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TBILISI, December 14 (Itar-Tass) — A step has been taken towards resolving the

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conflict in South Ossetia at the meeting between experts of Georgia and South Ossetia held in Moscow on Wednesday, leader of the Georgian expert group Irkali Machavariani, who took part in this meeting, said in an in interview with Georgian television.

Machavariani noted that the experts' meeting was held with the participation of representatives of Russia, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and North Ossetia. He indicated that the text of a memorandum on "First steps towards ensuring security and strengthening mutual trust between the sides involved in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict" which contains 12 points, was worked out during the meeting.

The Georgian representative emphasized that the text of the memorandum has not yet been signed, although a protocol has been prepared, stating that its text has been worked out. Machavariani emphasized that during the experts' meeting in Moscow the Ossetian side indicated that it should hold consultations on two points and discuss them in South Ossetia's People's assembly.

He noted that the Ossetian side has for the time being not expressed its readiness to accept to approve the second point, which states that the conflicting sides reject those decisions of the project, which were adopted unilaterally. He was talking of the Georgian side's refusal to approve those decision, which were adopted in December 1990 by the Georgian Supreme Soviet at that time, and concerned abolishment of the South Ossetian autonomous region, and the Ossetian side annuls its unilateral decision about declaring and proclaiming the Republic of South-Ossetia.

Irkali Machavariani thinks that the rejection of the decisions by both sides, approved unilaterally, will assist the process in resolving the conflict in South Ossetia.

The Georgian representative emphasized that the Moscow meeting of experts is a real step towards finding a solution to the conflict in South Georgia, although the text of the memorandum is yet to be signed.

Russian Official Denies S. Ossetians May Vote

LD1412152995 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1332 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TBILISI, Dec 14 (Interfax) — The press secretary at the Russian embassy in Georgia Aleksandr Sparykhin has denied Georgian press allegations that South Ossetia residents may take part in the elections to the Russian State Duma on Sunday.

A polling station will be set up in the area where Russian peacekeeping troops are stationed, he told Interfax on Thursday. Only Russian servicemen, their family members and residents of South Ossetia with Russian citizenship will cast their ballots there, he pointed out.

"These provisions of the law on elections also apply to Abkhazia, which, like South Ossetia, is an integral part of Georgia," Sparykhin said.

Abkhaz Side Fails To Appear for Latest Talks

LD1412153895 Tbilisi SAKINFORM in Russian 1050 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] [No dateline as received] — A quadripartite meeting for a peaceful settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, set to take place on 13 December in Zugdidi, was not held due to the Abkhaz side's failure to turn up at the meeting. However, the Abkhaz representatives did not clarify the reason for their absence.

Abkhaz Official Protests to Russian General on Execution

LD1412180195 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 1300 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] We have just received an address from Major General Tamaz Nadareishvili, chairman of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia and the honorable chairman of the council of Georgian officers and generals, to Maj. Gen. Vasiliy Yakushev, commander in chief of the Russian peacekeeping forces. The address in particular says:

Mr. General, it is extreme human exasperation that has forced me to address you, the man who is supervising the peacekeeping forces and who is obliged to be the guarantor of peace and security in the conflict zone in Abkhazia.

We were shocked and exasperated to hear that Ruzgen Gogokhia had been executed and, moreover, was executed under the most cynical pretext — treason. We are surprised at the fact that this has happened despite your numerous intercessions and assurances that the peacekeeping forces would not allow the separatists to break the law, and, moreover, take away people's lives. I am asking you, which country did Gogokhia betray and in the interests of which country did he act? Can a man dream up a more gross impudence than this act of vandalism? This act once again ignores world public opinion and throws down the gauntlet.

Are the official statements made by the world community, the CIS states, and the Russian Federation on the acknowledgement of Georgia's sovereignty and its state indivisibility futile? Do they not mean anything? Are the official statements condemning Abkhaz separatism and seeking measures to overcome it futile? How

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come Abkhaz separatists are displaying such willfulness and do not refrain from killing hundreds and thousands of people in the autonomous republic, showing an insulting attitude to the Russian Federation not only on the occupied territory but also beyond it? Where do so many unpunished, illegal, and immoral actions come from — actions that force thousands of Abkhazians to stand apart from them and condemn them? Maybe, Mr. General, the reason for this is that Ardzinba [Abkhaz leader] and his milieu have had, and still have, sympathy and the support of many of Russia's military and politicians, to whom Ardzinba is doing a disservice. As a result of this, the Abkhaz, Chechen, and combatants of many other nationalities have claimed the lives and health of thousands of Georgians, Russians, and peoples of other nationalities, to say nothing of the economic, cultural, and ecological catastrophe and damage inflicted by them.

The whole responsibility for this, along with other people, lies on you, Mr. General, and I am telling you, as a participant in this war, that the life of our compatriot is, first of all, the result of indifference on your part, as well as indifference on other people's part.

On behalf of all the participants in the Abkhaz war, I am telling you that I no longer have confidence in you, as my trust in your objectivity is running out — the objectivity of which I have long been aware of, and so have others. I am sure that not only Georgians but a vast majority of the people in the Russian Federation will condemn this act of vandalism, and people and God will make them answerable for this act. Every criminal will be punished deservedly.

Ioseliani Accused of Attempt on Shevardnadze's Life

LD1412174095 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1332 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TBILISI, Dec 14 (Interfax) — Georgian law enforcement bodies have made charges against Jaba Ioseliani, leader of the disbanded paramilitary formation Mkhedrioni, who was detained in the Georgian capital Tbilisi on November 15. Ioseliani is accused of organizing an attempt upon the life of Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze on August 29, and of an attempt to organize another terrorist act during Shevardnadze's inauguration on November 25, unofficial sources close to Georgian law enforcement bodies told Interfax.

Ioseliani categorically rejects his involvement in the terrorist act and refuses to testify.

Official sources in Georgian law enforcement bodies refused to comment on the investigation process.

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Latvia

Ulmanis Names Businessman as New Prime Minister Designate

LD1412125395 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1201 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] State President Guntis Ulmanis today announced that he would entrust the task of forming a government to businessman Andris Skele, the chairman of the board of the Latvian Shipping Company, the state president's office reported.

New Premier Already at Work

LD1412132395 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1300 GMT 14 Dec 95

While on a state visit to Germany, State President Guntis Ulmanis today officially announced that he has invited businessman Andris Skele to form a new government. Ulmanis explained that the new candidate for the post of prime minister has already begun working on forming a government. It is expected that he will form a broad coalition government.

Former KGB Chief Sentenced to Life Imprisonment

LD1312194795 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1800 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Riga District Court today delivered its verdict on Alfons Noviks, the former people's commissar for internal affairs of the Latvian SSR. Noviks was sentenced to life imprisonment, with the sentence to be served in a closed prison. The court found Noviks guilty of all charges laid against him.

The verdict found that Noviks had, over a period from 1940 to 1953, worked in posts of authority in various repressive institutions which conducted genocide against sections of the Latvian population, which Soviet power regarded as hostile. On the proven orders and commands of Noviks, hundreds of people in the 1940's were sent to distant regions of the USSR. On his command, many were unjustly imprisoned and shot in Latvia, and Noviks also personally took part in the torture of imprisoned people.

Finnish Army Chief Holds 11 Dec News Conference

WS1212145895 Tallinn BNS in English 1000 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riga, Dec 12, BNS — Latvia and Finland have a possibility to develop wide cooperation in the frames of NATO's Partnership for Peace program, Finnish army Cmdr. Gustav Hagglund told a press conference on Monday.

Until now, cooperation has been especially successful between both countries' naval forecs, he said.

Latvian and Finnish ships took part in international naval force trainings "Baltop'95" which were held in the Baltic Sea in the summer of 1995. During these trainings, ship crews could jointly acquire skills for peacekeeping activities as well as coordinate search and rescue operations.

Latvian and Finnish ships will take part in such trainings also next summer.

Latvian National Armed Forces' (NAF) Acting Cmdr. Juris Eihmanis told at the press conference that Finland has helped Latvia to master peacekeeping functions.

This year, more than 10 NAF officers have undergone training in courses for peacekeeping observers in Finland.

Hagglund expressed hope that Latvia and Finland will have an opportunity to cooperate in the frames of NATO peacekeeping operations in Bosnia.

Finnish soldiers plan to go to former Yugoslavia in ranks of the Nordic Brigade.

If the Latvian parliament and the government decide to send a NAF platoon to Bosnia, Latvians would also be included in the Nordic Brigade.

This is the first visit of the Finnish army commander to Latvia after the Baltic state regained its independence.

Lithuania

Defense Minister Against Baltic Military Union

LD1412172995 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 1400 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] It would not be expedient to set up a military union of the three Baltic countries at the present stage of integration into NATO, Linas Linkevicius, Lithuanian national defense minister, believes.

According to the minister, all efforts of the three Baltic states are beneficial only when they are aimed at helping to achieve the main target, which is membership in the European organizations. Meanwhile, slogans about joint strength may damage the prestige of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, Lithuanian minister of national defence told a BALTIC NEWS SERVICE correspondent.

However, Linas Linkevicius confirmed that he is not against cooperation of the three Baltic states in the sphere of defense. He described in positive terms the tripartite agreement signed this year which facilitates cooperation at all levels between ministries of defense and armed forces.

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Sejm Member Opposes Alliance

LD1412163495 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1342 GMT 14 Dec 95

[By Vladas Burbulis]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VILNIUS, December 14 (Itar-Tass) — "A defence alliance of Baltic countries is now out of the question," Kazis Bobialis, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lithuanian Sejm, believes. His statement was circulated here on Thursday.

The idea of such an alliance is good, he said. But this should not even be considered as there is an unstable political situation in Latvia. The same applies to defence structures in Estonia, he said.

Bobialis believes that borders of the economic zone should first be set in the Baltic (between Lithuania and Latvia — correspondent). Domestic problems should also be resolved. Then forming an alliance can be attempted.

Algirdas Saudargas, former Foreign Minister of the Sajudis government, currently member of the Sejm and leader of the oppositional Christian-Democratic party of Lithuania, has about the same opinion. "A separate dubious alliance of defences of the Baltic countries may be a wrong signal to Western countries. Therefore, such intentions are a very dangerous political tendency," he told reporters.

Former chief of the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry also said that as Baltic countries are not always in harmony, there is no need to be in a hurry about forming a defensive union.

As it is known, the idea of a defensive union was backed at a recent session of the Baltic Assembly in Estonia.

Ministry Supports EU Statement on PRC Human Rights

WS1512093995 Tallinn BNS in English 1932 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Vilnius, Dec 14, BNS — The Lithuanian ministry of foreign affairs informed Brussels Thursday that Lithuania supports a planned European Union declaration, condemning violations of human rights in China.

The declaration by the EU expresses concern that, despite international disapproval, China has convicted and imprisoned Wei Jingsheng, an eminent human rights activist.

The EU declaration demands the unconditional defense of Wei Jingsheng's rights.

It was proposed that Lithuania join in signing this declaration by the EU as an associate member of that organization.

Lithuania's foreign ministry gave its approval to this document condemning China while its prime minister Adolfas Slezevicius was still on an official visit to that country. The ELTA state news agency did not report on any signs of solidarity on the part of the prime minister with Wei Jingsheng's defense of human rights or with the position of the Western democracies.

Several Lithuanian parliamentarians have spoken out over the past few days, criticizing Slezevicius for his reportedly gauche statements in Peking in support of Chinese policy toward Tibet and Taiwan.

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